



GIANNI

PAPA



**G O G**



*by the same author*  
LIFE OF CHRIST  
ST. AUGUSTINE

G O G

BY  
GIOVANNI PAPINI



TRANSLATED BY  
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*first edition*

... Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,  
And shall go out to deceive the nations ...  
Gog and Magog.

REVELATION 20: 7-8

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## PREFACE



### MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOG

I AM almost ashamed to say where I became acquainted with Gog, for it was at a private insane asylum.

I used to go there frequently to see a young Dalmatian poet whose hopeless passion for a shade (the woman he worshiped was a film star who had never smiled upon him save from the screen) had resulted in paranoia. As he was usually quite calm, the director of this refuge for paying lunatics—a dwarf in stature but a giant in flesh—allowed us to sit together in the garden. Here and there, in the shade of pine or a horse-chestnut, stood chairs and round iron tables, as in a café, and pale-faced attendants clad in white paced the paths, apparently indifferent to their surroundings.

One very hot day, as the poet and I sat talking another inmate approached our table, a very monstrosity of about fifty, clad in light green. He was tall, but his build was ungainly and he was completely bald. No hair had he, no eyebrows, no mustache, no beard. His head was a shapeless ball of bare skin, with coral excrescences. The color of his unusually broad face was a deep red verging on purple. One eye appeared to be blue with a grayish tinge, while the other was almost green and was flecked with the yellow of blond tortoise-



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shell. His jaw was strong and square, and his thick but colorless lips parted on a smile that was metallic—being, in fact, all gold.

Silently he bowed to the poet and sat down beside us, and although he never spoke, appeared to be following our conversation with attention. I learned later from my friend that this was Gog.

His real name, I was told, was Goggins, but since early youth he had always been called Gog, a name he had willingly accepted because it seemed to surround him with a sort of aura that partook of both the biblical and the fabulous—Gog, King of Magog, as it were. He was born on one of the Hawaiian Islands of a native mother and a father who was unknown but certainly white. At sixteen he sailed as cook's assistant on board an American ship, landed in San Francisco, and lived here and there in California for some years, trusting to luck for a livelihood. In time he scraped together—who knows how?—a few thousand dollars and moved on to Chicago. He had a genius for business, or perhaps some good spirit watched over him, for in a short time his money-value grew to be enormous, even for Illinois. At the close of the war Gog was one of the richest men of the United States, which is as good as saying of this planet. In 1920 he retired from all his business enterprises without sustaining any appreciable loss, and deposited his millions in banks all over the world.

"Up to the present," he said, "I have been the slave of money; now money shall serve me. I will not postpone enjoyment and journeys of discovery until I am decrepit, as most men of my sort do."

From that hour there began a new life for Gog, a life

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of feverish searching for novelty, of rapid journeyings across continents, of surprises, mad doings, and sudden flights. Without wife or children, he had plenty of instigators, followers, helpers, advisers, and abettors.

In judging Gog, the perilous incongruities of his condition must be borne in mind. Here was a restless half-savage who could command the wealth of an emperor, a descendant of cannibals who while remaining entirely uncultured had gained possession of the world's most fearsome instrument for creating and destroying.

His lack of culture did not deter him from seeking to acquaint himself with all the refinements with which a civilization in a state of decay drags itself. This individual, who had always led a sedentary life desired now to visit all countries—he who had no country of his own. Bestial both by origin and by temperament, he was determined to revel in all the forms of cerebral epicurism of our epoch.

I soon saw that these wild excesses, while perversely familiarizing him with the most extreme ideologies, had at the same time strengthened his original barbaric tendencies. At times his brain could cope with the most pronounced forms of modernism, but his soul was become more barren and cruel than the souls of his maternal ancestors. All the instinctive intelligence that had aided him in his legalized pilfering of millions he now devoted to a feverish pursuit of all that is uncommon or voluptuous, to satisfying the most unnatural desires and the most infamous and fantastic caprices.

Seven years of such living consumed three quarters of Gog's capital and as much of his health. Since 1928 he has been going from one sanatorium to another, al-



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ways restless and impatient, and from time to time suffering a return of his insane yearning for change and novelty. The physicians who direct these retreats naturally seek to retain so lucrative a patient, but they never succeed for long. No psychiatrist has yet been able to define the precise nature of Gog's madness. Some talk of "depersonalization," others of "moral lunacy," but the majority hold that he is a prey to several different forms of insanity so interwoven as to exclude any treatment save one prescribed blindly and merely as a pretext. After being three or four months in one institution, he will insist on removing to another—to the "right one"—and so furious does he become that his will always prevails.

When I knew him he was but recently arrived at the asylum, and every time I went there to see my poet I saw him also. Presently he began to talk to me, and it was thus I learned his story—partly from Gog himself and partly from the physicians. His conversation was very peculiar; he would pass from what might indeed be paradoxical, but was at least coherent, to outbursts of vulgarity so coarse as to be absolutely disgusting. It was as if there dwelt within him both Asmodeus with all his cynical astuteness and Caliban with his blind and brutish coarseness.

Gog liked my company—I have always had a faculty for calming overwrought nerves and taming lunatics—and one day, after a longer talk than usual, he went to his room in the villa he had to himself in the grounds and presently returned with a packet done up in green silk.

"Read these pages," he said. "I saved them when I came ashore the last time. You will find in them some

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remains of the old Gog. Now I have reached the dawn when more than one sun rises, and I am selling the rags of night at the greatest possible discount."

Within the silken wrappings I found a thick packet of loose sheets covered with writing in green ink in an unformed, heavy, childish hand. I read them all, sometimes with a smile, sometimes with loathing, sometimes with horror, but always, I must confess, with eager attention. The work consisted of detached notes, pages from old diaries, fragments of things remembered, all flung together without date or sequence, and told in very ordinary language, which however was clear enough.

After this I was unable to return to the sanatorium for some time, and when I finally inquired for Gog, that I might restore his manuscript, I was told he had departed after a terrible attack and that he had left no message for me. I wrote to the asylum where he had taken up his abode, but received no reply. Nearly two years have now elapsed, and I know not whether Gog be alive or dead.

Not without reason, I think, I have reached the conclusion that he intended to present me with his compositions, and friends whom I have consulted confirm me in this belief. I have therefore decided to edit these pages—all save five or six that I regard as too revolting—and to publish them.

## II

AS THE reader will find, these pages form neither a book of memoirs nor, still less, a work of art. They con-



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stitute merely, it seems to me, a peculiar and symptomatic document, perhaps startling but possessing a certain value for the study of mankind and of our century. As such a document and with no other end in view, I publish this collection of notes, in the hope that on reflection readers will recognize the advantages accruing from this "breach of confidence" on my part.

I trust it is not necessary to add that I do not share the views and sentiments of Gog and his interlocutors. My whole being as it is now renewed since my return to Truth can but abhor all that Gog believes, says, and does. No one who is acquainted with my works, especially those of recent date, can fail to perceive that Gog and I have nothing in common. But in this cynical, sadistic, maniacal, hyperbolic semi-savage I see a sort of symbol of what, to me, is a false and stupid cosmopolitan civilization, and I set him before the readers of today in the same spirit in which the Spartans of old held up as a warning to their children the degradation of a disgustingly drunken helot.

There are many today who resemble Gog, but in my opinion Gog is for two reasons a particularly shining and instructive example, first because his wealth permitted him to commit with impunity many extravagant actions, either idiotic or criminal, that others of his ilk must content themselves with merely dreaming of, and in the second place because the sincerity of this primitive leads him to shameless confession of the most revolting fancies, such as others would seek to hide, not daring to utter them even to themselves.

To put it all in a single word—Gog is a *monster*, and he therefore represents, albeit in an exaggerated

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form, certain modern tendencies. But these very exaggerations serve to further my purpose in publishing his fragmentary diary, because thus grotesquely magnified the secret (spiritual) diseases of contemporary civilization are more clearly revealed. Nor would I have made public these pages had I not been convinced that all who read them will benefit thereby.

Finally, I wish to add that I have faithfully transcribed Gog's unadorned and careless prose, neither extending, retrenching, nor seeking to improve. It is therefore no fault of mine if this work is not a model of style. The order in which the chapters are arranged is merely approximate and conjectural and almost certainly incorrect, but I cannot arrange them differently. Gog generally indicated place, day, and month of each entry, but not the year, and I have had to content myself with a purely hypothetical chronology. This, however, is a very insignificant liberty I have taken in comparison with that other so vastly more important, of turning to account for the good of all what was evil in Gog.

G. P.



**G O G**





## THE MASTERPIECES OF LITERATURE

*Cuba, November 7*

FOR reasons of my own I felt the necessity of familiarizing myself with what college professors call "the masterpieces of literature." I therefore requested a certain librarian, the possessor of an academic title and one of whose efficiency I had been assured, to prepare for me as brief a list as possible and to provide me with the best editions of the works chosen. As soon as these treasures were in my possession I closed my door to all intruders and stayed in bed to read.

My first impression was one of bewilderment, for I could hardly believe that such humbug could really be a first-class product of the human intellect. What was not clear to me I set down as unimportant, and what I did understand either failed to amuse me or disgusted me. Absurd, tiresome stuff I found it all—sometimes entirely futile or even sickening. Tales there were that, if true, impressed me as being highly improbable and, if invented, then as being absurd. Presently I wrote to a well-known professor of W. College, asking for his opinion concerning the accuracy of my list. He replied that it was perfectly correct and so I had to resign my-



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self to my fate. I had the courage to read those books, all save three or four that, after perusal of the opening pages, I felt I really could not face.

I read of bodies of men called "heroes" disemboweling one another throughout a whole decade beneath the walls of a small town, all on account of a mature female who had been seduced; of the journeyings of a living man in the realms of death, merely as an excuse for speaking ill alike of the living and of the dead; of a couple of lunatics, one lean and one fat, roaming the country looking for a beating; of a warrior losing his reason for a woman's sake and then amusing himself with stripping leaves from the oaks in a forest; of a wretched coward whose father had been murdered and who wreaked vengeance by causing the death of the girl who loved him; and of sundry other assorted personages: of a limping devil who lifted the roofs of houses to expose the shame they harbored; of the adventures of an ordinary individual who played the giant among pigmies and the dwarf among giants—an attitude inappropriate and absurd enough in any case. I read the painful adventures of an imbecile who, after a chain of ridiculous mishaps, still maintained that this was the best of all possible worlds. Then came the doings of an adept in witchcraft, who had a professional devil as his servant; the dreary story of a provincial adulteress who was herself so bored that she ended by taking poison; the wordy and inane outpourings of a prophet who kept company with an eagle and a serpent; the tale of an impoverished and fever-maddened youth who murdered an aged dame and then—idiot that he was—found himself actually incapable of

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enjoying the fruits of his crime and finally gave himself up to the police.

My virgin intellect vaguely apprehended that this literature, so highly esteemed today, is really still of the Stone Age, and I was bitterly disappointed. Next I engaged a specialist in poetry, who further bewildered me by explaining that these works are esteemed for their style, form, and language, for the images and thoughts they contain, and that a trained mind delights in their perusal. I retorted that for my part, being obliged to read most of them in translation, I cared little for their form, and that as for their contents it seemed to me (what indeed it is) antiquated, senseless, stupid, and extravagant. This consultation cost me one hundred dollars and yielded me nothing at all.

Fortunately for me I became acquainted later on with some young authors who shared my opinion concerning these old books and who gave me their own works to read. In these, amid much that was obscure, I found a food better suited to my taste. But I still question the possibility of bringing literature to a state of definite perfection, and I deem it more than probable that a century hence no one will devote himself to an industry that lags so far behind the times and gives so poor a return.



## MUSICIANS

*New Parthenon, April 20*

WHEN it became known that I was a patron of art, a Macedonian musician approached me with an offer of his services. He had a triangular face surmounted by a shock of red hair. Also he was very tall, and his cloak, of no known shade, barely reached to his knees.

"What can you do?" I asked.

"I have invented a new sort of music without instruments," he replied. "The music of the past could only draw groans from dried guts, blow breath through metal tubes, and cudgel dead asses. I have discarded all artificial sound-producers and composed a symphony of natural sounds that imparts an entirely new and unexpected sensation and marks the beginning of a revolution in this already decrepit form of art."

"And what do you call this symphony of yours?" I inquired.

"It is called 'The Merry-go-round of the Planets.'"

"How soon can I hear it?"

"Two days from now," was his reply.

On the third day following I was informed that everything was in readiness. The lower end of the music room, I found, had been shut off by means of a heavy curtain of silvery gray silk; thus no musicians nor instruments were to be seen.

A prolonged groaning, like the noise of the north wind whistling through a crack, announced the beginning of the concert. Then behind the curtain there

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started a low and intermittent buzzing such as might be heard in the neighborhood of a beehive. A burst of water spouting from an invisible fountain provided an accompaniment of toneless rumblings, and at the same time there sounded a strident passage that might have been produced by many files grating furiously. But presently, to my surprise, all these sounds were drowned by a solemn chorus of leonine roars that voiced the vast hunger of the desert, the desperation of ferocity, the terror of the impossible. The silken curtain quivered and some of my companions paled.

Suddenly there was silence; we had reached the end of the first movement. The second opened with the rapid pounding of many hammers on their anvils, to be followed immediately by the whizzing of pyrotechnics in a state of frenzy, reinforced by the asthmatic poppings of a motor. The tinkle of glass as of an army of dancing tumblers ushered in the allegro, which continued with lively variations on certain vulgar noises. But above it all rose a guttural complaining of female voices, interrupted at regular intervals by odious outbursts of spasmodic laughter. A wave of sound as of the hoofs of galloping horses sharply striking on a flinty road brought this second movement to a close.

The third opened with a quick tapping behind the curtain, as if innumerable fingers were pounding upon innumerable typewriters. Gradually the tapping became fainter, like the dying down of a shower, and inhuman shrieks arose that might have been uttered by gigantic wolves driven mad by hunger. Hardly had these ceased when a buzzing as of innumerable ventilators filled the hall, relieved by a crackling reminis-



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cent of burning twigs, and by a soft rustling sound such as an army of silkworms nibbling among their mulberry leaves might produce. A dull bubbling as of water seething in a caldron supplied a bass accompaniment to this. There followed the whistling of blackbirds, the cooing of doves, the shrieking of owls, while the rattle of boards being knocked together formed a dominating crescendo. Presently the hammers formed a bang again, the lions to roar, the files to grate, and the motors to pop. Little by little to these sounds were added the whistling of locomotives, the lament of sirens, the rattle of muskets, the whining of klaxons, the clashing of iron being dumped—a very pandemonium of noise so intense that no one sound was distinguishable and the listener was crushed beneath a solid and monstrous roar that seemed to force the very walls outward as though striving to demolish them.

A sudden silence brought a sense of well-being, of deliverance out of the void. The symphony was at an end. There was no applause, and presently the Macedonian, cautious and sweating, poked his shock of red hair from behind the curtain, his slaty-blue eyes eagerly soliciting a word of approbation. But I remained obdurate. This clown from the Balkans was entirely lacking in self-respect.

The next day he offered to execute for my benefit a second symphony entitled "Ravings of the Titan Cocks." I declined, and he went his way resentful but with my check for one thousand dollars in his pocket.

Less than a week later another musician appeared. He arrived at the East Gate of the New Parthenon with a vast number of packing cases. I had him brought

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to me. This time it was a Bolivian with a copper-colored skin and sharply cut features dominated by a nose like a dagger.

"I have invented the music of silence," he announced. "Do you wish to be the first to hear it?"

"The music of silence?" I queried.

"All music tends towards silence," he replied, "and its power resides exclusively in the pauses between one sound and another. Composers of the old school must still use the props of harmony to liberate the secret of silence. But I have discovered the way to abolish these superfluous scaffoldings of notes and to produce silence in all its original purity."

The following evening found me in a music room again. At the further end some twenty musicians sat ranged in a semicircle around the conductor's platform. They were equipped with the usual instruments: violins, cellos, flutes, and drums—not even the kettledrum was missing. The musicians sat like fixtures, motionless and rigid in their black coats. Not one turned his head or bent over his music stand. I looked closer. Above dazzling white shirt-bosoms all the heads were alike—they were the sphinxlike heads of wax figures, of artificial corpses. All had the same glass eyes, the same red mouths, the same noses—rather pink these, and somewhat shiny.

The Bolivian ascended the platform and gave the signal to begin by tapping on his music stand with a long white wand. No one stirred, no sound was heard. Only the conductor moved, casting up his eyes as though listening to a melody revealed to him alone. Presently he began bowing to right and left, fixing his



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gaze on the waxen features now of one, now of another of his ghostly musicians, indicating with his baton now a pianissimo, now a presto, swaying gently on his hips in a way reminiscent of a vanishing phantasm. The forty porcelain eyes remained fixed upon him with a common expression of helpless aversion.

At last, after a final straining of his great red ears, this time with bowed head, the conductor turned and faced us, smiling triumphantly. I approached him and handed him a check that I had torn from my book and had not taken the trouble to sign. He departed next morning in high spirits and with his carefully sealed cases. I was told he was singing softly to himself the words:

*"Para marchar yo solo por la tierra  
No hay fuerzas en mi alma. . ."*

Since that day I have never allowed another concert to be given in my house.



#### A VISIT TO FORD

*Detroit, Michigan, May 11*

I HAD already met Henry Ford several times while I was still in business, but on this occasion I intended to pay him a purely social, "non-business" call. I found him in good spirits and looking extremely well, and

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consequently well disposed to converse, and to speak freely.

"You are of course aware," he began, "that with me it is not a question of developing an industry but of carrying out a great intellectual and political experiment. No one has ever really grasped the mystical principles that control my activities, yet they could not well be more simple. They amount merely to the *Four Less*, the *Four Plus*, and all that is therewith connected. The *Four Less* stand for proportionate reduction of the number of workers; reduction of time for the production of everything marketable; reduction of the number of types of the articles produced; and finally, progressive reduction of sale prices.

"The *Four Plus*, which are closely connected with the *Four Less*, represent the multiplying of machines and apparatus in order to reduce the cost of production; a definite increase in daily and yearly output; higher mechanical perfection of the product; higher wages and stipends.

"To a superficial, old-fashioned mind these eight points may appear at variance with each other, but you, as a practical man, will certainly recognize their perfect harmony. To increase the number and output of the machines implies the possibility of reducing the number of workers; to reduce the time necessary for the manufacture of an object means to produce daily a greater number of objects; the result of diminishing the number of types and obliging the consumer to set aside his personal taste results in increasing production and lowering its cost; and finally, by reducing prices and raising salaries I augment the number of those



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who can buy and am thus enabled to increase production without risk. While cars are expensive and my employees' wages low, few will buy. Pay high wages and sell cheaply, and all will become your clients. The secret of money-making is to pay like a spendthrift and sell as if on the verge of bankruptcy. This paradox, so alarming to the timid, is the secret of my own success.

"But to return to my eight principles; it is an easy matter to understand through them that the highest ideal attainable would be *to manufacture without a single workman an ever-increasing number of articles that cost hardly anything at all*. I am willing to admit that several decades must elapse before this ideal is realized. I may be Utopian but I am not a lunatic! Meanwhile I am preparing for the great day. Right here in Detroit I am building a new factory that will be called Solitude, a jewel, a dream, a miracle—the factory where there is never anybody. When it is completed and the machinery installed (all of the latest models and part of it newly invented and already in course of construction) there will be no need of hands. From time to time an engineer will visit Solitude for a brief inspection; he will start a few bits of mechanism and come away again. The machines themselves will do all the work and they will labor not only by day as men do now, but all night also and on Sunday as well, for there is no law in Michigan forbidding motors and lathes to function on the Sabbath. Every evening an electric train, running automatically, will transport to the different warehouses the thousand automobiles or airplanes that Solitude has turned out. Twenty years

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hence all my factories will be identical with this one and I shall be able to place millions of cars a month on the market with the sole aid of a few dozen technicians, warehouse men, and accountants."

"The idea is certainly ingenious," I observed, "and the system would be admirable were it not for one objection. Who will buy the millions of cars, tractors, and airplanes? In suppressing the workers you are reducing the number of purchasers."

A complacent smile illumined the features of this young old man.

"I have not overlooked that point," said he. "I shall turn out so many machines and at prices so low that no other manufacturer anywhere in the world will be able to compete with me. Thus my factories will supply five continents. There are still many parts of the world where neither the car nor the airplane is in common use; by means of advertising and bank control we shall force all peoples to use them. The number of my outlets will be practically unlimited."

"Pardon me," I interrupted, "but if by your methods you practically wipe out all industries in other countries, how are those countries to find money for the purchase of your products?"

"That is no stumbling-block," Ford replied. "Foreign customers will pay with articles their ancestors have produced, articles our factories cannot turn out: pictures, statues, jewels, tapestries, old books and furniture, historic relics, manuscripts, and autographs—all those *unique* things which we cannot produce by machinery. Collections both private and public overflowing with these treasures that it is impossible to re-



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produce still exist both in Asia and in Europe—the accumulation of seventy centuries of civilization. In Europeans and Asiatics alike the desire to possess the most modern mechanical appliances is daily increasing, and at the same time their attachment to the remains of ancient culture is on the wane. The time will soon come when they will be obliged to sell their Rembrandts and Raphaels, their Velásquezes and Holbeins, their Mainz Bibles and precious copies of Homer, the jewels wrought by Cellini and the works of Phidias, to obtain from us a few million cars and motors. Thus, to view the storehouses of the universal culture of past ages men will have to come to the United States, which, incidentally, will be greatly to the advantage of all industries connected with the tourist trade.

“Let me add that in consequence of the reduction in cost of production my prices will be so extremely low that even the poorest countries will be able to afford my touring airplanes and family cars. As you must be aware, I do not seek riches. Only manufacturers in a small way who still employ old-fashioned methods work for the sake of gain. What do you suppose millions can mean to me? If they come my way it is not my fault but merely the inevitable result of my altruistic and philanthropic system. Personally I lead the life of an ascetic—three dollars a day will feed and clothe me. I am the disinterested mystic of production and sale. Excess of profit bores me and interests only the fiscal authorities. My ambition is scientific and humanitarian—the religion of movement without pause, of unlimited production, of the all-dominating, all-emancipating machine. When every man can own his own airplane

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and need labor but a single hour a day, then I shall be recognized as one of the world's prophets, and men will fall down and worship me as the true redeemer. And now, Gog old man, will you have a drink? Is it true you have secretly joined the *wets*, or has some one been slandering you?”

Never have I tasted better whisky nor conversed with a more profound thinker, and I shall not easily forget my stay in Detroit.



#### THE MIRACLE IN THE HOME

*New Parthenon, July 17*

I HAVE always had a desire to witness a miracle, and in order to avoid any possible mistake I have sought out specialists in that line. In the course of my travels I have collected five individuals who in their own countries are reputed to possess great powers in the art of thaumaturgy, and they are now here and at my service.

They have cost me a great deal, for not one of them was willing to leave the land of his birth without a generous indemnity, but I fancy I am the only man living who can count no less than five magicians among his retainers. One alone might have failed me or might not have been always in the right mood, whereas in this way I was sure of obtaining the “miracle in the home” whenever I asked for it.

The first of these magicians is a Tibetan, Adjrup



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Gumbo by name. He says he is a Yellow-Hat Lama and that he acquired his skill in magic in the course of long years that he spent in a *gampa* among the wildest mountains of Tibet, as a disciple of the famous Ral-Pa of Ladakh.

The second, Tiufa, is a Wambagwe negro from East Africa, and among his tribe was reputed absolute master of heaven and earth.

In Bengal I was able to secure the celebrated Baba Bharad, a Saniasis who has become one of the most remarkable fakirs of all India.

The fourth is Fang Wong, a Chinese Taoist, an adept and later an instructor in the methods of the tantric school, that is to say, of the most celebrated magic of the Orient.

The last is Wolareg, a European who pretends to possess the most ancient of initiate traditions and affirms that he is one of the chief luminaries of Occidental occultism. He has never been willing to tell me where he was born; he speaks four or five languages well and is forever writing. He is over six feet in height and his face resembles that of an old Chinese baby. His neck is always enveloped in a shawl because he is a sufferer from boils and carbuncles, and he speaks in a high, somewhat childish voice but always solemnly.

I felt sure I had chosen my subjects wisely and that at last I should be able to witness an authentic and tangible miracle. A miracle from time to time would have been a remedy against those horrible attacks of ennui from which I frequently suffer. Alas, mine were mistaken calculations, vain hopes! At least, up to the present I have never witnessed anything that could be

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called a miracle, although for over a year five super-magicians have been living at my expense.

I am bound to acknowledge they have been willing enough. Whenever I have ordered one or other of them to perform a miracle for me he has done his best to satisfy me. I have always left the choice of time and the type of prodigy to them and I have consented to innumerable postponements. Their promises were always such as to arouse the liveliest anticipations. Tiufa pledged himself to make rain fall out of a clear sky and to stop a thunderstorm. Fang Wong was sure of his power to call up a certain number of demons who would obey my every command. Adjrup Gumbo declared himself prepared to resuscitate a corpse in my presence and enable me to converse with any deceased person I might choose. Baba Bharad, who has specialized in levitation, assured me that one day or another he would ascend unaided into the skies, disappear from sight and, at my command, descend to earth again. And finally Wolareg declared himself capable of breaking or moving objects without touching them, of altering the substance of things, of making gold, of evoking spirits that would talk, and of enabling me to become master of the phenomenal and occult world.

All these promises notwithstanding, their efforts have failed. Now, certain essences or stones would be lacking that were absolutely essential and must be procured from the depths of Asia or of Africa and took months to arrive; again, the cosmic forces were antagonistic or the conjunctions of the stars were not favorable and the ceremony must be postponed; or the magician would fall into a state of catalepsy brought



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about, as he would explain on awakening, by the machinations of a certain wizard who was his sworn enemy and who, although far away, had come to know of the proposed undertaking. Wolareg declared he could accomplish nothing unless he might perform his rites in a subterranean cavern whose walls must be lined with basalt, which should face as he would order and contain tripods, magical herbs, wands fashioned from the bones of defunct initiates, and a sanctum sanctorum. I had the cave constructed in the remotest corner of the park, all according to Wolareg's plans and wishes, but something essential and unobtainable was always lacking, and indeed it is he who has cost me most and given me the least satisfaction.

The others have tried once or twice to perform some clever trick instead of the promised miracle. At first, for my own amusement, I would let them go on, but later I made up my mind to expose them, for I have no intention of wasting my money. That I might not appear entirely ignorant I had provided myself with some works on prestidigitation and with some critical essays on mediumism and fakirism, and I had studied them all carefully. No tricks could be played on me.

On one occasion, when a servant of mine had died, Adjrup undertook to bring him to life again. He shut himself up in the death chamber for a number of hours, filled it with smoke, and then sent for me. Through the mists of aromatic vapor I did indeed perceive that my poor Ben jerked his leg and raised his head from time to time, but on ordering the windows to be thrown open, I discovered that instead of applying the science of the lamas the Tibetan, using the wires of the electric light,

#### THE MIRACLE IN THE HOME

had availed himself of a current that Western science had placed at his disposal. And we buried the supposedly resuscitated subject next day in a neighboring cemetery.

Baba Bharad wished to produce for my edification the well-known prodigy of the mango seed that, placed in the ground and watered, will grow into a tree with a fruit upon it, and this within an hour. With the help of a spade, however, I had no difficulty in showing him that I was familiar with the deception and that the trick consisted in his having previously placed the small plant in the ground, resting on a round of cork, which in due time was forced to the surface by the water.

In a darkened apartment Fang Wong evoked the apparition of a greenish body, which he declared was that of one of the fiercest demons of the underworld, one of the frightful Fang Leangs. My electric torch, however, disclosed the presence beneath the green cloak of a negro who worked in my kitchens and who, on the promise of a bottle of gin, had consented to enact the demon.

As for Tiufa, all the satisfaction he has afforded me was the sight of his sooty, greasy body stuck full of long pins from which dripped a few drops of blood—too slight a return this for the expense of maintaining him.

Now the time has come to think of ridding myself of my five impotent magicians. From the height of his six feet old Wolareg looks down and declares that the "aura" is lacking, that this materialistic country prevents manifestations of pure spiritual power, and finally that my own skepticism paralyzes his powers and those of his colleagues.



AN ISLAND TALE

I must record a noteworthy fact, namely, that the five necromancers have become great friends and that they are blessed with appetites of a truly miraculous excellence.



### AN ISLAND TALE

*New Parthenon, November 11*

LAST Saturday evening an individual unexpectedly appeared whom I had not seen for twenty years. In my early days in San Francisco I suffered the pangs of hunger and the horrors of fear in the company of Pat Cairness, an Irishman full of resource and good spirits who more than once rescued me from despair. Since coming East I had never heard from him.

When he walked in unannounced I failed to recognize him. His coloring has changed and his physique also appears altered. He used to be a reed with a white skin—now he is an oak with a dark one. He tells me he has been a great traveler, first from necessity and later from curiosity. There is no country he has not visited, no road he has not traveled. He speaks eight languages and some twenty dialects; he has recruited coolies, been in partnership with pirates, been a trader in serpents, a chief magician, a sham Buddhist monk, a desert guide. In a word, he has plied all the trades of those whose sole desire is for change. If he should write of his adventures

AN ISLAND TALE

tures his book would surpass in interest any work by Melville or Jack London.

He declares, however, that the days of adventure are past; that there is no spot on earth where the traveler and civilization have not left a trace; that it is practically impossible to find a corner of jungle or of steppe where no white man has set foot. In the whole course of his wanderings he has discovered but a single island that before his coming was still unknown to mariners and geographers. This is an island in the Pacific only slightly larger than one of the Sandwich group and lying south of New Zealand. Its sole inhabitants are a few hundred Melanesian Papuans who came hither in their canoes centuries ago.

"The singularity of this island," Cairness began, "lies not in its aspect, which is that of the other Pacific islands, nor in its inhabitants, who have preserved the customs and traditions of their race, but in a single particular—namely, that the chiefs long ago recognized the island's incapacity to maintain more than a given number of inhabitants, that number being precisely seven hundred and seventy. Much of the soil in the higher regions is unproductive and the sea is not overpopulated with fish. Nothing is received from foreign parts, for since the coming of the first settlers no one has landed on these shores, and their descendants have lost the art of building large craft. For this reason, therefore, the Council of Chiefs long ago passed a very strange law, namely, that every birth must be followed by a death, so that the number of inhabitants may always remain seven hundred and seventy. This law, which I believe is unique of its kind in the world, is strictly



#### AN ISLAND TALE

enforced by the Council of Elders, composed of necromancers and warriors. As everywhere, so here also the births outnumber the natural deaths, so that every year from ten to twenty of these unfortunates who are cut off from the world must suffer death at the hands of the tribe. The dread of famine has led the Papuan oligarchs to invent a means of regulating the census that although extremely primitive is certainly effectual. Once a year, in the spring, the rulers assemble, and the list of births and deaths is read out. If, for example, there have been twenty births and only eight deaths, then twelve of the living must be sacrificed for the good of the community. Once upon a time the most aged were chosen to suffer, but as the Council of Chiefs is composed mainly of old men, they managed, by what means I cannot say, to have the matter settled by the drawing of lots. Every inhabitant is equipped with a shingle, on which his name is inscribed by means of drawings or hieroglyphics. When the terrible day arrives these shingles are collected and cast into the hull of a canoe sunk in the earth in front of the Council Hut, and thoroughly stirred about with an oar by the oldest necromancer. Then a dog, trained for the part, is let loose. He jumps into the canoe, seizes a shingle in his teeth, and consigns it to the chief, repeating this performance as many times as is necessary. The victims chosen are given three days in which to take leave of their relations and to put an end to themselves in any way they may prefer. If after three days there is any one who has lacked courage to commit suicide, he is seized by four men of the strongest, placed in a leather

#### AN ISLAND TALE

sack together with some heavy stones, and cast into the sea.

"Told thus, the matter seems simple enough and in a way perfectly logical. But you must have lived among these people for a time, as I did, to form an idea of the horror of this law and of all its consequences, both tragic and grotesque. In the first place, every woman who finds herself pregnant immediately shuts herself up in her cabin, not daring to be seen by anybody. She is an enemy; every one must hate her. Every unborn child is a menace to those already born—a public danger. And not even the parents themselves are free from anxiety, for fate may single out one of them (as has sometimes happened) to disappear from the earth to make room for their child. It follows that barren women are the most highly esteemed and that men do not marry unless they have practically taken leave of their senses.

"Murder, moreover, is of frequent occurrence in the island, because by its means assassins seek to balance the number of births and deaths, and thus, for a time at least, avoid the awful surprises fate may be holding in store. In the whole course of my travels I have witnessed nothing more doleful than the assembly when those to be sacrificed to the specter of famine are chosen. I was present on one such occasion, and although I am far from sentimental, I confess I carried away and still retain a most painful memory of it. For days beforehand people try to hide in caves, in the hope of avoiding the ordeal. But the island is small and every individual has a personal interest in watching his neighbors' movements—absentees only increase the risk for



#### AN ISLAND TALE

those present. Some have to be dragged to the assembly by force, and you will see them struggling violently to retain possession of their shingles. On the occasion to which I refer those in excess numbered only nine, and I observed that not one of them accepted the decree of fate with resignation. A woman clung wildly to the chief's knees, imploring mercy. It appeared she was the mother of a young child and she begged, with streaming eyes, to be allowed another year of life that the child might not be left alone. One man, already advanced in years, declared that he was suffering from a mortal disease and would soon relieve the tribe of the burden of his maintenance, but he besought them to allow him to die a natural death. A youth cried aloud, begging to be reprieved from immediate death not on his own account but for the sake of his aged mother, and of three brothers, all of whom were too young to replace him in supporting the family. A father and a mother howled like wild beasts because the youngest and finest of their sons was among the victims. A maiden implored them to allow her to live until her wedding day; she was soon to be married and could not bear to die before she had fulfilled her promise to her betrothed. A gray-beard, who was a member of the council, sought to save himself by proclaiming that he alone was acquainted with certain secrets necessary for the welfare of the tribe, and that if he were sacrificed he would take his revenge by dying without divulging them.

"For three days only groans and lamentations were heard throughout the island. But the law is inexorable and tolerates neither delay nor remission. On one condition only can a victim's life be saved—if another will

#### THE "FOM"

volunteer to die in his stead. As far as I could ascertain, however, this hardly ever happens. By the third day seven of the condemned had taken their own lives amidst the wailing of relatives and friends, and at dawn on the fourth day only two sacks were cast into the sea, in the hushed presence of the entire population. But I observed that those who had escaped immediately brightened up and assumed a more cheerful air—a year of safety lay before them."

Pat Cairness told me many other tales, but this one impressed me most deeply of all on account of its remarkable singularity.



#### THE "FOM"

*Chicago, April 3*

THIS morning, while I was busy preparing my Asiatic itinerary, an individual verging on fifty was introduced, a pleasant-spoken, somewhat obsequious person, who declared he must consult me in private on a matter of great importance. So I sent my secretary away and prepared to give the man my attention.

"Have you ever heard of the Fom?" he began in a low tone. I was obliged to admit I had not. "I thought as much," said he, "and it is as well you have not. As I shall explain to you, it is a question of an unwritten



#### THE "FOM"

law. My chiefs feel that it is most desirable you should become a member of Fom."

Concluding that he must mean some sort of Ku Klux Klan, I promptly declared that I did not wish to have anything to do with secret societies.

"When I have explained the Fom to you I am sure you will change your mind," said he. "The name, as you probably understand, is made up of initial letters. Our league is called the 'Friends of Mankind,' and its purpose is an entirely disinterested one. The founders, whose names I cannot reveal at present, start from the premise that the continual increase in humanity's numbers is prejudicial to the well-being of humanity itself. No matter how hard industry, agriculture, and the colonial trade may strive to make good the 'deficit,' it is clear that in a short time the difference between the banquet spread and the number of banqueters will be enormous. Malthus was right; his one mistake was that he believed the disaster to be nearer at hand than it actually was. As a matter of fact, by means of earthquakes, eruptions, pestilence, famine, and war, Nature herself sees to the periodical decimation of the human race. Motor traffic, the dope industry, and the progress made in the matter of suicides have all contributed in recent years toward reducing the number of inhabitants of this planet. But these—let us call them 'dispensations'—are yet insufficient to balance the increase in the birth rate, without counting the fact that they are in themselves forms of suppression too painful for the victim.

"Now how is this state of things to be remedied? Although as yet no one need go hungry, the time is

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nevertheless approaching when our helpings at the banquet will be reduced, and this is where Fom comes in. Its purpose is the rational acceleration of the disappearance—removal—of such as are least worthy to live. Ours might well be called the 'League for Imperceptible Euthanasia.' The drawback to natural means, such as epidemics and wars, is that they suppress the young, the innocent, and the vigorous. But while the population of the earth must of necessity be reduced, it is only just that the first to be eliminated should be those who are of no use, those who are dangerous, or those who have already lived long enough. Earthquakes and cholera are blind forces, but we of the Fom have eyes that are far-seeing. Our league proposes, then, to hasten, gently, discreetly and in all secrecy, the removal of the weak, of incurables, of the aged, of the corrupt and the criminal—of all, in fact, who do not deserve to live, who live but to suffer or are a burden to society.

"The means we employ are highly perfected—poisons that leave no trace, hypodermics in strong doses, inhalations of anaesthetics and of poison gases. Many physicians, nurses, and domestic servants are with us, all of these being persons most favorably situated for carrying out our humane purposes, and I must say the results we obtain are excellent. Many private individuals also are glad to lend us their support, with all necessary precaution, in suppressing a friend, a relative, or a mere acquaintance. Public morality, which is still under the cloud of ancient superstitions, will not yet recognize us, or rather will not tolerate our beneficent operations, and we are therefore constrained to act in the greatest secrecy. Thus far none of our mem-



### THE "FOM"

bers have been denounced, and in spite of all obstacles the statistics of mortality since the founding of the Fom have shown that our philanthropic endeavors have not been in vain.

"Besides the—let us call it 'thanatoid'—section of the Fom, there is another equally important, which might be termed the Department of Moralization. There are, alas, certain forms of evil that our laws do not punish or which the police fail to discover. Here also the league metes out the necessary repression. Here also a committee composed of professors of morality and jurists attends to the compiling of a list of individuals deserving punishment in any town or city. In inflicting these punishments we have been obliged to have recourse to professional criminals or to volunteers who undertake to deal with the guilty in all secrecy. They steal from thieves, misers, and cheats; they kidnap and do bodily harm to such as systematically ill-treat children or the helpless; they subject the proud to humiliations, send threatening letters to gamblers and smugglers, and in various ways chastise unscrupulous speculators, accomplices to crime, and other dangerous or immoral persons. In such cases we are homeopathic in our treatment—a crime for a crime. In order to punish evil we are obliged to inflict evil, but the loftiness of our purpose absolves us.

"As you must perceive, the Fom has set itself two necessary and honorable tasks—to prevent the decline of the standard of living, which is threatened by an excess in population, and to combat all such vice and crime as the law does not punish. This means the elimination of the superfluous and the purification of society.

### THE DESERTED CITY

By our twofold activities, therefore, we contribute towards the material and ethical improvement of the human race, and with an easy conscience we may well proclaim ourselves the Friends of Mankind."

I let this loquacious apostle of the Fom have his say, for I was anxious to hear it all, and I confess that some of his reasoning appealed to me. One who, like myself, is free from all moral or religious bias cannot seriously condemn such arguments. If indeed there be but one life and if to live mean to obtain a generous helping at the universal banquet, then the program of the Friends of Mankind is logical and scientific. Only my aversion to close association with others and to the bonds of secrecy deterred me from becoming a member. Nevertheless, fearing their vengeance, I allowed the representative of Fom to depart with high hopes. Four days from now I am leaving for San Francisco and China. It will be time enough to think the matter over when I return.



### THE DESERTED CITY

*Tientsin, December 18*

THE most marvelous city I saw in all Asia is certainly the one I discovered on an October evening in the heart of the desert to the east of Khamil.

The caravan of camels, which had been composed at Turfan with much difficulty, was too slow for one ac-



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customed to the speed of European and American expresses. With only three stages of our journey behind us I had already taken so violent a dislike to the Mongolian camel-drivers that I found it becoming every day more difficult to refrain from stimulating the laziest of them with my whip. Once arrived at Khamil, it looked as if we should never get away again, the excuse for delay being difficulty in obtaining provisions. In despair at having to tarry in this filthy town, where there is nothing to see or do, I asked the head man, Ghitaj, if it would be possible to push ahead on horseback and wait for the caravan in the open desert.

Early one morning, then, mounted on a couple of long-haired horses that though small were very swift, we turned our backs on the disgusting Khamil and rode eastward. The air was chilly but clear. The trail stretched in an almost straight line through the short, stiff grass of the boundless desert. For many hours we rode in silence and without meeting a living being. In the shelter of a sand dune we halted to partake of the roast sheep-flesh we had brought with us. Ghitaj succeeded in lighting a small fire of brushwood and in preparing for me the famous Mongolian tea made with melted butter, while the horses grazed in the pale sunshine. Presently we set out again and rode until sunset. Ghitaj told me we would find the camp of some herders of horses near the trail, but we could discover no smoke anywhere on the horizon. In the twilight we could still distinguish the road, and presently the moon, which was nearly full, rose in the east where the desert ended.

The horses showed no signs of weariness nor could we do otherwise than press onward. To return to Khamil

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meant to retrace our steps over all the road we had already traveled, to journey throughout the night. Ghitaj was ever on the lookout, straining his eyes to pierce the pale mists of the immense reaches, for a sight of the camp that he declared must be near at hand. The moon floated high in the sky; the horses began to whinny; the icy night-wind rose, its sweep unhindered by hills or trees. From time to time we drew rein to listen and to swallow a little vodka. But no tent was visible, no voice or other sound was to be heard. I looked at my watch and found it was ten o'clock; we had been sixteen hours in the saddle. The horses had dropped into a walk and we began to dread the moment when they would lie down, exhausted.

Suddenly, in front of us and about half a mile away we perceived a long shadow, high, solid, and straight. Ghitaj could not say what it was. In places the shadow rose straight up like a tower, and the nearer we approached the more firmly did I become convinced that what we saw was indeed the walls of a city. Ghitaj, who had become more silent than usual, would not answer my eager questions. I was not mistaken. In the veiled white light of the autumn moon there loomed before us a vast circle of high walls, all complete with round watchtowers. It was indeed a town!

I was overjoyed! Those walls meant a place of refuge, an inn, supper, a bed, safety. But Ghitaj remained silent and seemed anything but pleased at being here. I asked him what the city was called, but he would not tell me.

"We had better not enter," was all he would say.

I could not understand his attitude. I had drawn



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rein before a lofty portal of wood studded with great iron nails. It was locked. I pounded upon it with the butt end of my gun but no one answered. Ghitaj had dismounted and stood at some distance, lost in thought.

Seeing that no one was going to open this door, I decided to ride round the walls in search of another gate. About half a mile farther on, between two towers, a great dark arch spanned the mouth of an opening. I started to ride through it, but after advancing a few paces my horse stopped. At the end of the vaulted passage was a closed door. Here also my knocking remained unanswered—no sound reached me from beyond the gigantic portal.

I came forth again and resumed my journey round the walls, which rose before me lofty, ancient, uneven, dark, and silent, like a vast, upsoaring cliff. Not far from the great gate I discovered a postern of insignificant aspect but marked by a piece of sculpture that surmounted it, of which the marble had grown dark with age. In the dim moonlight I could distinguish the figures of two anthropocephalous serpents in the act of kissing. This door, like the others, was locked, but it appeared to yield when I pressed hard against it. Summoning Ghitaj, I ordered him to help me, and beneath the pressure of our shoulders the two rotten wooden panels gave way and flew open. But Ghitaj would not enter with me. I had never seen him so downcast. Stretching himself upon the ground, he rested his head against the wall and took out a sort of rosary.

"Ghitaj will wait here," said he. "Ghitaj will not enter. Nor should you do so, either."

I refused to listen to him. My horse was indeed weary,

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but it seemed as if the neighborhood of habitations had revived him. I entered a labyrinth of narrow, silent, and deserted streets. No lanterns hung above the doors or in the windows; no voice was heard; there was no sign of life. All the doors were closed. The houses were low, and as far as I could judge poor and in bad condition.

Presently I came upon a great square that was bathed in moonlight. I glimpsed a row of figures surrounding it, which seemed too large to be those of human beings, and on drawing near I saw that they were stone statues of animals. I could distinguish a lion, a camel, a dragon, and a horse.

The houses in the square were more imposing than any I had yet seen, but as closely shut and as mute as all the others. I tried knocking at some of the doors and shouting, but no door was opened and no voice answered mine. The silence that reigned in this dream city was broken neither by the tread of man nor by the baying of a dog or the neighing of a horse. I rode through other streets and reached other squares, for the city was very large—at least, so it seemed to me. In a tower rising in the center of what appeared to be a sort of cloister, I thought I saw a flash of light and I paused to observe it, but presently a flutter of wings told me it was but a flock of night birds. There seemed to be no other living creature in the city. In one street I distinguished something white in the shadow of a doorway. I dismounted and by the light of my electric torch saw the skeletons of three dogs still wearing three rusty chains that were attached to the wall.

My horse's weary plodding was the only sound to be heard in this deserted city, all the streets of which were



### THE DESERTED CITY

paved, and it struck me that remarkably little grass had sprouted between the stones. The city seemed to have been but recently abandoned, at most a few months since. The buildings were intact, the windows carefully protected by shutters painted red, the doors stayed and barred. There could not have been an earthquake, a fire, or a massacre, for everything was undamaged, clean, and in good order, as if all the inhabitants had fled together quietly at one and the same time and by common arrangement. They had certainly left in a body. There had been neither destruction nor sudden flight. A woman's jacket and a small bag containing a few copper coins I found lying on the ground—that was all. When I paused to listen I heard only the rustling of moths and the scampering of rats.

I rode on in the shafts of moonlight between the uneven shadows cast by the buildings, arriving at last before a huge brick palace that looked like a fortress and had probably been a royal residence or a prison. Beside the main portal stood two bronze statues of warriors clad in copper armor that had taken on a greenish patina. Towering like sentinels long since dead, they stared fixedly at me out of empty sockets.

It was at this point that I began to feel the horror of this ghostly city, this wilderness in the desert, forsaken by man. Beneath the moon in that labyrinth of streets and open places, where only the wind was at home, I felt horribly alone, infinitely strange, irrevocably set apart from my kind, outside, almost, of life and of time. I shivered, perhaps with weariness or hunger, perhaps with fear. My horse was now going very slowly, his

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head drooping dismally, and stopping from time to time, he would also shiver.

Fortunately I was able to find the postern by which I had entered. Ghita-j was asleep, wrapped in his fur cloak. At dawn we saw smoke in the distance. It was the camp we had hoped to find the night before. Two days later my caravan arrived.

No one in all Mongolia would tell me the name of that deserted city, but often—in Tokio, San Francisco, Berlin, or elsewhere—I have revisited it in one of those terrifying dreams out of which one is nevertheless loath to awaken. And at such moments I am swept by a wave of nostalgic yearning, by a mighty longing to see that city again.



### A VISIT TO GANDHI

*Ahmedabad, March 3*

I DID not wish to leave India without having seen the most famous living Indian and so, a few days ago, I went out to the Satyagraha-Ashram, where Gandhi lives.

The mahatma received me in a practically bare room where he was seated, lost in thought, beside an idle spinning-wheel. He struck me as even uglier and more gaunt than he appears in his photographs.

"You wish to know why we purpose to drive the English out of India?" he inquired in the course of



#### A VISIT TO GANDHI

conversation. "The reason is a simple one. The English themselves put this entirely European idea into my head. The thought took shape in my mind during my long residence in London. I discovered that no European people would stand being controlled and governed by men of another nation. This sense of national dignity is especially pronounced in the English themselves. It is precisely because I am too much like the English that I will no longer tolerate them in my house. Indians of a past era cared little for the affairs of this world and least of all for politics. Absorbed in the contemplation of the Atman, the Brahma, the Absolute, their sole desire was to become merged in the one infinite spirit. To them the everyday, outward life was a tissue of illusions and what was really important was to escape from it as quickly as possible, first by means of the state of ecstasy and finally by death. English culture, the culture of the West in general, which came hither in the wake of conquest, has altered our outlook on life. When I say 'our' I mean the outlook of the intellectuals, for the masses have for centuries remained deaf to the European message of political liberty. I am the first to be thoroughly imbued with Western ideas and I am become the guiding spirit in India precisely because I am less of an Indian than any of my brethren.

"If you will read my works and study my propaganda you will see clearly that four fifths of my culture and of my spiritual and political education are of European origin. Tolstoi and Ruskin are my real masters. The doctrine of non-resistance I preach was inspired by Christianity rather than by Jainism. I have translated Plato, I admire Mazzini, I have meditated over Bacon,

#### A VISIT TO GANDHI

Carlyle, and Böhme, and I have made use of Emerson and Carpenter. My views concerning the justification of disobedience have come to me from Thoreau, the wise hermit of Concord, and my campaign against machinery is but a repetition of that which the Luddites, the followers of Ned Lud, carried out in England between the years 1811 and 1818. Even the poetry of the spinning-wheel was revealed to me by the Gretchen episode in Goethe's *Faust*. As you see then, my theories owe nothing to India and everything to Europe and more especially to English writers. You may be astonished to learn that it was not until 1890 in London that I studied the Bhagavad-Gita, at the suggestion of Mrs. Besant, an English woman. And today, in striving for the union of Hindus, Moslems, Parsees, and Christians, I am but championing the principles of religious unity established by theosophy, itself a purely European creation. It is, I think, unnecessary to add that my condemnation of caste distinctions is a derivation from the principles of equality laid down by the French Revolution.

"The history of Europe in the nineteenth century was a determining factor with me. The struggles of the Greeks, Italians, Poles, Hungarians, and southern Slavs to rid themselves of foreign domination served to open my eyes. Mazzini has been my prophet. The theory of home rule in Ireland was the model for the movement I have named 'Hind Swaraj.' This means that I have introduced into India a principle that is absolutely foreign to the Indian mind. The Indians, who by nature are impassive and metaphysically inclined, have always regarded politics as an inferior activity. 'If control be necessary and there be those willing to exercise it,' they



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have reflected, 'let them do so—it means one task less for us.'

"The Indian lives purely in the spirit, aspiring always towards eternity. What matters it whether those who rule here be native rajahs or foreign emperors? Thus for centuries we bore the Mongolian and the Mohammedan dominations. Then came the French, the Dutch, the Portuguese, and the English. They laid out farms along the coast, they penetrated into the interior, and we allowed them to do so. The Europeans, and they alone, are answerable for our present desire to drive out Europeans. Their ideas have changed us, we have *de-Indianized* us, and so, having learned from our masters, we have conceived the desire to be rid of them. I, being the one most thoroughly imbued with English thought, am naturally destined to lead the anti-English crusade. It is not a question of a struggle between East and West, as European journalists assume, but quite the reverse. India has become so thoroughly impregnated with Europeanism that we have been forced to rise against Europe. Had India remained purely Indian, that is to say, purely Oriental, had she remained lost in contemplation and fatalism, no one would have thought of shaking off the English yoke. Inasmuch as I have betrayed the ancient spirit of my country, I was destined to become the liberator of India. By means of my propaganda (admirably prepared for by English culture in our schools!) European ideas now sway the masses, and the thing is past remedying. An authentic Indian can bear slavery; an Anglicized Indian wishes to be master in India as the English are masters in England. Those who are most strongly Eng-

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lish—as I was myself until 1920—have become, of necessity, anti-British.

"That is the real meaning of what is called the 'Gandhist Movement,' which it would be better to call the movement of Indians converted to Europeanism against renegade Europeans—that is to say, against those English who would perish of shame should the French or Germans ever come to rule in their country, yet who, using philanthropy as a pretext, assert their right to govern a country that is not their own. You have changed our natures—and we will no longer tolerate your presence. Do you remember Goethe's *Zauberlehrling*? Well, the English have awakened the demon of politics that slumbered in the depths of India's impassive and ascetic soul and they now find it impossible to subdue it again. So much the worse for them!"

While he was still talking, one of Gandhi's disciples had entered the room and now made a sign to the mahatma, so as soon as he ceased speaking I rose to take my leave. Having thanked him for so much more information than I had expected, I got into my car and returned to Ahmedabad.



SIAO SIN

Singapore, August 13  
THE visiting-card bore the inscription:

SIAO SIN  
FIRST-CLASS MEDIUM  
BATAVIA

Spiritualists, with their tricks, systems, and mysteries, I detest. I sent him word that I was ill and could not see him. The next day I received the following letter.

"DEAR MR. GOG:

"You have made a mistake. Had you allowed me a moment's speech with you, your prejudices would have been overcome. For, being a reader of thoughts even at a distance, I have learned the true reason for your refusal. It is a reason I respect, a reason with which I sympathize, in fact. Like yourself I desire no dealings with the dead. Only vulgar mediums devote themselves to evoking the disembodied, and with all necessary apologies to Richet and Sir Oliver Lodge, I would observe that their honesty is not always above suspicion. Do the spirits of the dead go on living? Can they return to earth? Does there exist a reliable means of communicating with them? To all this I am indifferent.

"But the *living* do exist, Mr. Gog. *Their* reality cannot be doubted. They live here on this earth and we can communicate with them even from a great distance.

SIAO SIN

My propositions are solid and by no means mysterious. My art, or rather my gift, consists in *evoking the living*. Phantoms they may be, but phantoms of beings who actually exist in another part of the world. My powers as a medium are at the service of those whom distance separates, of the afflicted, of friends, of lovers, and also of the merely curious.

"Have you ever had to live far from a person who was dear to you? How many times a day you have longed to see or speak to that person, if only for an instant! There are letters, to be sure, but these are never the whole person—only a mere fragment of his thoughts. Nor can photographs and portraits ever become substitutes for the dear presence. From time to time the presence may be with you in a dream, but how vague is the vision and how sad the awakening!

"My power as a medium is a mighty palliative of the pains of separation. I pledge myself to cause to appear to you in your own room, and within the hour, any person you may name, even though at the time he may be at the antipodes, and this without ceremonies or any ritual of magic. Remember that I am no necromancer—no summoner of the dead. I leave the departed to Sir Conan Doyle and his credulous followers. I work with living material for the benefit of the living. I need but a slightly darkened room, a small brazier, and an arm-chair—nothing more. As soon as you have given me the name, description, and residence of the man or woman you wish to see I abstract myself and concentrate. A hundred or a thousand miles away the person chosen will first feel a slight somnolence creeping over him,



SIAO SIN

then presently will fall asleep. If the evocation can be made at a time when the person summoned is already sleeping, so much the better; the result will be more immediate.

"After a pause, which seldom lasts longer than forty minutes, you perceive a sort of cloud forming in your room, which may be either deep yellow or purple in color. By degrees there emerges from this cloud the figure of the person you have been longing to behold. The face is that of the individual evoked, who appears but slightly less substantial than if he were flesh and blood. Do not be astonished if he seems drowsy, but begin to talk to him at once. He will answer you in a faint and weary voice, but in a perfectly intelligible manner. You must neither approach him nor touch him. That would be terrible both for you and for your visitor. The vision can last but a few minutes. Presently you will see it becoming merged again in the vaporous mass and finally disappearing. I am at present seeking a means of prolonging the stay and I have reason to hope my studies will soon be crowned with success.

"I would point out that your choice is unlimited. It is by no means essential that you should be personally acquainted with the person you evoke. For instance, if you were in America and one day desired to speak with Lloyd George, Stravinsky, or King Alfonso, you could easily do so. The corresponding phantom would appear in the way I have described and you would be able to put any questions you liked to these illustrious personages. My system does away with the necessity for long journeys and with delays in obtaining

SIAO SIN

audiences of world-wide celebrities. From what I know of you it seems to me that this form of diversion should appeal to you.

"I am sure you will not question the accuracy of what I have set forth. You are certainly acquainted with that classic by Messrs. Myers, Gurney, and Podmore on the *Phantasms of the Living*. It deals with a great number of cases of vulgar telepathy, of apparitions (at a distance) of the dead or dying. What was possible spontaneously, I was convinced, could be brought about by means of a determined effort. I made the effort and I have been successful.

"As my name will have told you, I am a Chinese, but I studied for many years in Europe—in Geneva, Leipzig, and London. I have but developed, in accordance with Western principles, certain precious instructions contained in the writings of the Taoist school. The rest—my success, I mean—is entirely due to my native qualities and to strenuous endeavor.

"Should you wish to avail yourself of my services, you can telegraph me at the World's Hotel, room 354. I am staying here two days longer.

"Yours very sincerely,

"SIAO SIN"

I neither answered that letter nor did I telegraph. This Siao Sin seems to be a reasonable and serious-minded individual, perhaps capable of accomplishing all he promises. But I have thought the matter over very carefully. In no part of the world does there exist, at the present moment, a single person, male or female, whom I have any desire to see again.



## MASKS

If he has done nothing more, Siao Sin has at least evoked for me a vision of my own complete isolation.



## MASKS

Nagasaki, February 3

YESTERDAY I purchased three Japanese masks that are authentic, antique, marvelous! I hung them upon my wall without delay and I am never tired of looking at them. Man is a greater artist than Nature! Our true faces seem colorless and devoid of expression beside these masks made out of a few bits of wood and some lacquer.

As I look at them I ask myself how it is that man covers all other parts of his body, even his hands (with gloves), and leaves the most important part naked? If modesty and shame be our reasons for hiding our members, why not hide the face, which is usually our least beautiful and perfect part?

The ancients and primitive peoples, in many ways more intelligent than we are, wore or wear masks when performing the finest and most solemn acts of their lives. The earliest Romans, like the savages of today, put on masks when about to attack the enemy in battle. Necromancers and priests had ceremonial masks for the performance of incantations and of sacred rites. Greek and Latin actors never appeared without the mask. In

## MASKS

Japan all dancers were masked. (The masks I have purchased, in fact, were used in dancing the *genjō-raku* and date from the Heian period.) In mediaeval times members of a confraternity hid their faces beneath a hood with holes for the eyes, and I recall also the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan, the Council of Ten in Venice, and the Iron Mask. . . . War, art, religion, justice—nothing great was done without the mask.

Today the mask is in decadence; it is now worn only by buffoons in carnival time, by brigands and drivers of racing cars. Carnival itself is practically dead and highwaymen are becoming ever more scarce.

I am of opinion that the mask should form part of one's costume, to be worn or not, at will, like gloves. Why content oneself with a face that is not infrequently a source of humiliation to its owner and of offense to others? Every individual could then choose the face he prefers, the one best suited to his frame of mind. We might all have several different masks made to order, and wear one or the other according to our mood or to the nature of our occupations on a given day. In their wardrobes, together with their hats, people would keep a sad mask for funerals and visits of condolence; a fierce mask for arguments and duels; a pathetic or amorous mask for flirtations or betrothals; a mirthful mask for the play, supper parties with friends, and so forth.

I am convinced that many advantages would accrue from the general adoption of the mask.

1. Hygienically. The mask would afford protection for the skin.

2. Aesthetically. A mask made to a man's own order



## MASKS

would always be handsomer than his natural face, and would spare us the sight of many idiotic or disfigured countenances.

3. Morally. By the use of the mask the necessity for pretense, for adapting one's expression to sentiments one rarely entertains, would be lessened, limited to speech alone. We could then call upon a sorrowing friend without having to force our features to display a grief we do not feel.

4. Educationally. The prolonged use of the same mask, as Mr. Beerbohm demonstrates in his *Happy Hypocrite*, ends by molding the flesh of the face, and even transforming the character of the person who wears it. The irascible individual, wearing the mask of peace and gentleness for many years, would end by losing the facial signs of wrath and little by little also the tendency to fly into a rage. Other and similar points might well be carefully worked out; the use of the mask in pedagogy, for example, in the artificial development of genius, and so forth. A man wearing the mask of Raphael for ten years and living the while surrounded by masterpieces—in Rome, for instance—might easily become a great artist. Why not found upon these principles an Institute for the Manufacture of Talent?

## CHINESE WISDOM

Peking, March 28

IN A Chinese book, I have come across some thoughts that are so beautiful, just, and profound that I am copying them out here, in order to have them always at hand.

抱不笑飲是故去著  
刃爲之惟不飲是  
以轉後皆最姪有  
自與受仆不飲姪  
喪荆殃僵祥情髮還

姪言愚癡所親絕羅  
欲爲人者向表欲網  
刀見食無不以求四  
如斧歡其不見求面  
是裁喜味壞裏道張



## HISTORY REVERSED

Cairo, January 10

PROFESSOR KILLALOE, with whom I had a long talk after lunch at the hotel the other day, is an Irish-



#### HISTORY REVERSED

man of about sixty who is still full of life and energy. He is as tall as any Patagonian, as hot in dispute as Old Nick himself, as learned as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and as lean as a hermit. I do not know where or what he teaches, but he speaks with authority on all subjects and without dragging in any of those platitudes in which so many professors delight.

"I am here," he said, in the course of our conversation, "to finish my *Universal History*. The chapter on Egypt will be one of the last."

"Do you consider the reign of King Fuad sufficiently important to have a chapter to itself?" I inquired.

"Fuad? A most engaging person, indeed, but as yet he does not belong to universal history. The last king of Egypt to appear in my history is Menes or Mini, who perhaps never existed."

"The last? But my Baedeker says that Menes was the first Pharaoh."

"Precisely. And therein Baedeker is of one mind with Mr. Wallis Budge, Mr. Edward Meyer, Sir W. M. Flinders-Petrie, Mr. Breasted—in fact, with every one of the historians of ancient Egypt. Your mistake, like that of all historians the world over, derives from the age-old, firmly established, and idiotic habit of making every history start from a purely hypothetical beginning and come to an end somewhere near our own era. Historians are strange beings, with eyes in the back of their necks and between their shoulders. Their constant purpose, which has now become a habit, is to proceed, as regards time, from the past towards the present. And that is the reason why not one of them, from

#### HISTORY REVERSED

Herodotus to Wells, has acquired any proper understanding of the history of mankind.

"In this connection, take a book written in English and one in Hebrew. You begin to read the English book from the page numbered one and go on to the end, but the Hebrew book begins with what to us would be the last page and gradually works back to the first. If we apply this parallel to the writing of history, the Hebrews are certainly in the right. The proper way to write history logically and intelligibly is to begin with events of recent occurrence and work back to the most remote."

"But how about chronology?" I asked.

"Chronology is one of the keys to history and must be respected. But I do not upset chronology if instead of starting from one to reach one thousand, I start from one thousand and go back to one. Like all who are unversed in this matter, as well as the specialists themselves, you are a victim of a mental habit that still continues to dominate the science of history in all its branches.

"My method, which consists in retroceding from the present to the past, is the more logical, natural, and satisfactory—the only method that renders possible a true interpretation of human affairs. Remember that an event is not seen in its true light until decades and sometimes centuries have elapsed. When I read that the Moslems entered Jerusalem in 637, I have learned only one small particular of the military expansion of Islam. But if I start with the year 1095, when the First Crusade was beginning to be preached, the whole incalculable significance of the event becomes apparent to



## HISTORY REVERSED

me. That at a certain point the Christians of the West came to regard as an intolerable outrage the fact that the sepulcher of Christ was in the hands of infidels, and that this sentiment generated the conflict between East and West—therein lies the key to the determining importance of Omar's entry into Jerusalem. But it was nearly five centuries before that pregnant event was delivered of its vast consequences. And so if I tell the story of the Middle Ages backwards, when I reach the year 637 I am already in possession of the true meaning of that event, precisely because I have already told of the taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099. It is the same with all happenings. In order to understand Roman imperialism one must first have studied the barbaric invasions, and only after acquiring a knowledge of Luther can one comprehend the great monastic orders of the thirteenth century.

"Thus, also, a knowledge of Buddha is necessary for a true understanding of Brahmanic India of an earlier date. The Eastern exploits of Julian the Apostate and of Pompey must first be explained if when we get to Alexander the Great we expect to be able to realize the effects of his march across Persia. Without a knowledge of the adventures of Napoleon, the French Revolution remains incomprehensible, and without the Revolution no exact conception of Louis XIV and of Louis XI can possibly be formed. The late European war must be considered as a prior event, indispensable in reconstructing the formation of the national monarchies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is the *after* that explains the *before* and not vice versa.

"That is why historians, both ancient and modern,

## HISTORY REVERSED

are no better than chroniclers with the eyes and genius of the mole. Only by proceeding backwards will history become a real science. In this field also it is time to apply the golden rule that has made the fortune of all other sciences: from what is known to what is less known, towards what is unknown. Are we not best acquainted with the times in which we live? It follows then that the first chapter of every well-planned universal history should chronicle 'current events,' and the last chapter tell the story of Creation."

"But how is it possible to apply this system of retrocedence to biography?" I asked.

"It works admirably," was his reply. "It has already been said that no judgment can be formed of a man until his last hour, and in science to judge is to understand. To understand a great man you must, of necessity, start from his death. The life of Caesar, in fact, starts from the day of his assassination. Why was he assassinated? This question leads us step by step to learn of his ambitions, his campaigns, his dictatorship. The crossing of the Rubicon opens the way to an understanding of his previous rivalry with Pompey, and this explains his democratic leanings, which in turn find their key in his connection with Catiline. There is nothing strange about the fact that the final paragraph of the life of Caesar deals with his birth, and whether Caesar, according to the ancient methods of history writing, enters into the tomb or, according to my method, reënters his mother's womb, the result is precisely the same—from that moment, be it birth or death, *Caesar is no more.*"

"And so your history . . ."



THORMON THE SOTERIOLOGIST

"My history begins with the year 1919 of our era, with the Peace of Versailles, and ends with the story of the first day of Creation, when, as we read in Genesis, 'the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.' As you see, the beginning and the end are thus reunited; I would almost say that they overlap, fit into each other, become one and the same thing. Chaos and darkness in the beginning, chaos and darkness in the end. The great ring of history is closed."

Hereupon Professor Killaloe dragged his great length out of his rocking-chair and with a smile worthy of Hamlet invited me to accompany him on his daily visit to the Sphinx.



THORMON THE SOTERIOLOGIST

*Luxor, January 6*

IT WAS not enough that I should have to suffer the persecutions of interpreters of the Pyramids and of resuscitators of mummies—today another visionary lay in wait for me. His name is Thormon and he boasts of his descent from a priest of Ammon the King. For my part I should have set him down as a Levantine out to make money. He is tall and robust, with a round face the color of cinnamon that is embellished with pinkish scars. He informed me that his profession is soteriology, which means the science of deliverances.

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"All ancient peoples," he began, "have believed in metempsychosis, as a great part of India does today. Primitive peoples, who stand nearer than we do to revealed truth, make no distinction between human beings and animals in this respect; a man, they hold, can be transformed into an animal and an animal into a man. Africa has human tigers, but Europe has human wolves. Moreover psychologists, zoölogists, breeders, and tamers have all discovered traces of human intelligence in most animals. The famous case of the Elberfeld horse and Köhler's experiments with apes have now clearly demonstrated that animal and human psychology do not differ very widely, and this fact confirms beyond a doubt the theory which sees in the brute the reincarnation of a human soul.

"If metempsychosis be a true doctrine we must recognize the presence of the spirit of man in almost all animals, and our moral sense is confronted with the problem of how all these incarcerated spirits are to be set free. How are all these humans who have reappeared as animals to be restored to their original shape?

"In the presence of this great work of redemption every other human ideal fades into insignificance. There are those of our kind who bear the yoke of hunger and toil, but at least they are still men. They can talk, love, and best of all, they have hands, those marvelous implements that no machine can ever equal. Think, then, what torment you would suffer were your spirit confined after death within the hairy body of a bear or the scaly skin of a serpent. To harbor the thoughts and desires of a human being and be forced to live the



#### THORMON THE SOTERIOLOGIST

life of a brute, without even the consolation of language, of laughter, of commiseration!

"For the past twenty years I have devoted myself to searching for a means of obtaining the retrocession of the animal into the human. The ancients have left us not only records of the metempsychosis of men into beasts but also of that of beasts into men. Unfortunately, however, they have failed to explain the methods used to obtain these results. Only Homer and Apuleius have thrown out some hints, but after all, these are but vague. Circe in the *Odyssey* anoints the companions of Ulysses with a balsam so that they may be retransformed from swine into Greeks; and Apuleius' ass finds himself a man once more after feasting on a spray of roses. But unfortunately, here again tradition has failed to hand down to us the recipe for Circe's philter, and in spite of all my experiments with various preparations, the swine, alas! have always remained swine. I have on several occasions forced donkeys to eat roses but without obtaining any result. Either no human soul was hidden in any of those asses or else the right sort of roses no longer exists.

"An English scientist, a certain Mr. Wells, advises individual education such as Dr. Moreau practiced. This method I have also tried, but with no better results. For a certain time, indeed, the beasts may appear to be regaining their human consciousness, but after a brief interval they again relapse into the purely animal. Life is not like that: what happens is an outer reaction, with an immediate effect.

"But the main cause of my failure to achieve my purpose is my poverty. In theory I have already pre-

#### THE PENITENT CANNIBAL

pared two formulas that I consider infallible, but to put them into practice will call for long months of labor and above all, for certain mineral and vegetable substances most difficult to obtain and consequently very costly.

"Your kindness of heart will surely not allow you to remain insensible to the daily sufferings of millions of our brothers who are imprisoned in the bodies of animals in every corner of the world. You are rich and in a position to help. One day history will proclaim that, thanks to Gog, soteriology was founded, and that to him innumerable beings have owed their restoration to human dignity."

As this soteriologist was obviously no better than a charlatan, I kept to myself the objections it would have been easy to muster against his nonsensical fancies. It cost me fifteen dollars in cold cash, however, to free myself from this liberator.



#### THE PENITENT CANNIBAL

Dakar, January 28

OLD Nsumbu, whom I brought along as a companion, is too melancholy. I would never have believed that a negro could suffer remorse to such an extent. So repentant is he that he has become unbearable. Nsumbu is seventy-five, and he grew up at a time when the evil



#### THE PENITENT CANNIBAL

practice of cannibalism still flourished among his tribe. For forty years on end Nsumbu ate of everything, indeed, but as often as possible of human flesh, either black or white.

At last, however, at the close of the last century, the villages of the tribe were incorporated in one of the new European colonies and cannibalism was rigorously suppressed. Those suspected of having killed were put to death. There were dead bodies, of course, as before, but it was no longer possible to enjoy them.

Nsumbu vegetated miserably during this period of reaction. The foreigner had brutally deprived him of the finest article of food that had graced his board. He became constantly more depressed, but fear prevented him from resorting to unlawful means of obtaining his favorite dish in defiance of the authorities. It is to his caution that he owes it that he is still alive and somewhat of a celebrity as one of the veterans of cannibalism in that part of Africa. Foreigners passing his way get him to talk and then reward him with small sums of money.

I decided to take him with me in order that in moments of weariness I might hear something less insipid than ordinary conversation. I have come to detest people who are always talking of pictures, balls, works of charity, or industrial problems. A man who in the course of forty years of legalized cannibalism has devoured at least three hundred of his kind should certainly be a more "appetizing" conversationalist, I reasoned, than a clergyman, a "boss," or an aesthete. But I have been bitterly disappointed.

To me, detesting mankind in general as I do, the

#### THE PENITENT CANNIBAL

mere sight of an anthropophagite is stimulating. Looking at Nsumbu, I reflected that that wrinkled, old-man's belly of his had been the sepulcher of a number of human beings equal to that of the heroes of Thermopylae. If in the course of our lives each one of us should consume a like number of his kind, the theories of Malthus would find economic and practical confutation. Three hundred men would always represent more than forty thousand pounds of fine-flavored, healthy meat. Nsumbu has nothing to say against the quality of man as an article of food.

"Not all men are equally digestible," he once told me, "but their flavor is always agreeable and delicate. In addition to his other higher qualities, man may boast that his flesh is finer than that of any other animal and on the whole more nutritious. After a good meal of roast enemy I had no difficulty in fasting for a couple of days, even when hard at work. Some prefer women and some prefer children, but for my part I always esteemed full-grown men most highly, and the diet certainly suited me. You are doubtless aware that by eating of an animal you acquire its qualities. For developing valor lions' hearts are the thing; to become cunning foxes' brains should be partaken of. By feeding on fully developed men I increased my strength and wisdom and have thus been able to reach my present advanced age.

"After a time one tires of human flesh. Its very excellence turns one from every other sort of food but in the end even it becomes repugnant. Always the same sweetish taste, and then those tongues which are too much like our own, those hands which have caressed us, those hearts to whose throbbing we have listened!



#### THE PENITENT CANNIBAL

"Moreover, there is the danger of the souls. You go on eating men until at last a soul takes up its abode within you, and then it has its revenge. Personally I believe I have four or five such who torment me, now one, now another, now all together. The strongest of these is, I think, the soul of a very benevolent white man, who tortured me for years by tempting me to become pious. And now in my old age this soul has got the better of me. I cannot recall without nausea the festive banquets of my youth, when the tribe had been victorious and the hunt had brought into the village living victims enough to gormandize on for a week. I recall instead, with twinges of remorse, certain agonized faces of the victims awaiting death chained to the wall of the sacrificial cabin, in sight of our howling and famished jaws. The missionaries are right; it is sinful to devour our own kind, who have souls like ourselves. Human flesh is the most delicious of foods and because this is so there is all the more merit in abstaining from it. Precisely because you white people do thus abstain the Ruler of the Universe has allowed you to possess the earth."

I fear old age has reduced Nsumbu to a state of imbecility. To the intense astonishment of my cook he now eats only fruit and vegetables. Civilization has spoiled him, has made a humanitarian and a vegetarian of him. I believe I shall have to dismiss him at the next port we touch at.

#### ULTRA-MODERN CITIES

*Capetown, November 2*

WHO can have told Mr. Sulkas Perkunas that it was my intention to found a new city? So far as I can remember, I have never taken any one into my confidence on this subject. And how did this fantastic Lithuanian discover me here in South Africa, where I had hoped to be able to preserve my incognito at last?

Mr. Sulkas Perkunas has refused to satisfy my curiosity on this point. He is a man of about thirty, but he might well be sixty and the governor of a prison, so gloomy and severe is he in appearance. Two faded, almost colorless eyes, as watchful and earnest as those of a pauper orphan, stare out of a countenance as sun-scorched and reddened as any planter's. Tall, spare, badly dressed, and topped by a broad-brimmed hat of gray felt, he came boldly up to me as I was entering the hotel and demanded an appointment for a consultation, which, he said, could brook no delay. I took him into one of the waiting-rooms, and it was then I noticed that he had light hair and was carrying a thick roll of documents under his arm.

"I will waste no time in superfluous apologies," he began. "I am Sulkas Perkunas, a city-planner. I studied first in Germany as an architect, but soon wearied of an art that tamely confines itself to single edifices which must conform to the aesthetic precedents established by preëxisting structures. I observed that the old cities that have been built little by little, by different forms of



#### ULTRA-MODERN CITIES

culture and in different epochs, are absurdly heterogeneous, and that they defy all efforts to improve them. I hold that the time has come for creating as a whole, for creating the city with a difference. An architect may no longer plan a single temple or palace to be inserted in an antiquated complex; he must create a compact body of edifices, the fruit of a single and revolutionary conception. Can you imagine a modern poet trying to wedge a verse of his own into a canto of the *Iliad*, or interrupting an act of Shakespeare to introduce a scene of his own invention? Yet what is demanded of modern architects, and what they are cowardly enough to produce, is an absurdity of this sort.

"I have no intention of proposing plans for a villa, a theater, a bank, or a kursaal; all that I leave to ordinary architects who possess neither style nor a conscience. Instead I offer you the plans for entire cities, cities different from all others. You alone, I believe, are in a position to grasp the novelty of my art, to choose a plan and actually build the city.

"All those conglomerations of houses strewn about the world and called cities, save for certain differences of patina, are maddeningly uniform in their disorder. Not one of them was conceived synthetically by a genius as a work of art, and executed in a spirit of truthfulness, so that a thought might take shape in stone. For the most part they are but monstrous jumbles due to chance and the caprices of generations, and all serve the usual purposes of that odious institution, life in a community. Everywhere there are big houses with doors and windows arranged any way, huge masses of inhabited masonry, which may appeal to the copperplate en-

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graver, to the decadent, or to the speculator, but are simply disgusting to one possessed of a more delicate sense of the dignity of man . . ."

"Pardon me," I said, interrupting his flow of language, "but I have had enough of theory. I think you mentioned plans . . ."

"I have them all here," Sulkas Perkunas assured me, entirely unmoved. "But unfortunately I can do no more than briefly illustrate a few of my conceptions—those which would be most likely to tempt you. For example, I can offer you a city without houses and entirely composed of towers—a forest of soaring trunks of stone and brick. Or, should you prefer it, here is a city consisting of a single edifice, a gigantic palace a mile each way, with countless galleries, endless corridors and passages, with stairs and landings innumerable and of huge proportions, with well-planned courtyards and cellars, so that beneath its enormous roof tens of thousands may dwell.

"Perhaps, however, you may prefer the city composed entirely of very high houses without doors or windows. These buildings would be entered by shafts sunk in the ground and the rooms would receive light from above or from narrow loopholes in the rear walls. The streets of this town would be long and narrow corridors running between naked walls all painted white, or, should you wish it, decorated up to the roof with frescoes, the work of artists of lively imagination.

"Or would you prefer the City of Perfect Equality? It is composed of thousands of houses precisely alike, of the same height, style, and color, and all with an equal number of doors and windows. Regarded as a whole this



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scheme may seem somewhat monotonous, but the effect is certainly impressive, to say nothing of the city's value as a symbol whose meaning is clear enough, although it may be in a way greatly in advance of present ideals.

"Should the City of Equality fail to appeal to you I may mention another that is far more original—the City Invisible. A person viewing it from afar would not be aware of its existence; he would merely see long intersecting lines of cement and nothing more. On drawing near, he would perceive on either side of these lines square wells like the entrances to underground railways but on a smaller scale; and in these wells he would find stairs leading downwards to the dwellings. For this city is built entirely underground and all the houses are subterranean. There is no lack of air, however, for it is supplied and renewed by means of tubes that cool or heat according to the season, and light is provided by an electric plant functioning automatically.

"Should living underground not meet with your approval, I could build you the Polychromatic City, with houses designed on geometrical lines and all painted in the brightest of primary colors. You, like many another, must be tired of the grays and blacks that prevail in the northern cities and of the too dazzling white of the Orient. In this city of my imagining you would find sealing-wax-red palaces, apartment houses painted grass-green, public buildings in chrome-yellow, and for the wealthy castles all silvered over or gilt.

"Or I could supply you with something even newer and more hygienic—the Hanging City. Here the streets would form long lines of lofty walls; on top of these, in

#### ULTRA-MODERN CITIES

the place of roofs, there would be spacious earth terraces laid out as gardens, and in their midst would stand cottages for the inhabitants. Communication would be made possible by means of lifts for the permanent dwellers and airplanes for travelers.

"Should a city of this description impress you as unstable, I would propose the most original of all—the Cemetery Town. This would represent a practical and significant link between life and death. The tombs would be spacious and airy in order to contain both the living and the dead. The private chapels might easily be converted into common banqueting-halls, and a part of the crematory might become a general kitchen. Every family would keep its own dead walled up in niches built into the walls, which arrangement would greatly facilitate the cult of the dead. The inhabitants of such a town should be admirers of Anne Radcliffe, of Hoffmann, and of Poe, and it would not be difficult, I think, to find a few thousand such persons to populate this city, which would be unique in the world. It has also occurred to me that in the center of the city we might set up a huge skeleton of yellow marble to serve as a town hall. I would run a stairway up the spinal column, and the gigantic skull might serve as council chamber. Fancy the city fathers leaning out of the empty eyesockets that would represent windows, and the mayor addressing the people from between the jaws arranged as a balcony!

"Or would you prefer the Titanic City? Picture to yourself long avenues flanked by enormous palaces as high as cathedrals, all of white and red marble, and in the middle of these avenues, gigantic statues—colossal,



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permanent, eternal wayfarers. Here and there would be broad, endlessly long flights of stairs stretching upwards to lose themselves among the clouds, and on these would stand bronze giants in attitudes of mounting towards portals wider than the Arch of Stars itself, or towards altars as vast as open squares, or towards spires of burnished copper that appear to touch the skies. I must warn you at once, however, that this would be a very costly city, but one finer than any dream of Piranesi, than any poem of William Blake, surpassing Nineveh and Persepolis, outstripping imagination."

"What would it cost?" I inquired.

"At least twenty-five milliards," was Sulkas Perkunas' brief reply.

"All right," said I. "A year from this time you may bring me the estimates, the plans drawn to scale, and prospective and panoramic views."

As I spoke I rose to dismiss this dangerous planner of cities. Mr. Sulkas Perkunas collected his papers in silence, merely observing when he had finished: "I shall be on time."

Finally, after a sketchy bow, he turned and hastened from the room and from the house.

## THE PHANTASM TRUST

*Algiers, February 19*

FOR some days I had been conscious of being followed by a sort of timid monstrosity who could never make up his mind to address me, a huge hunchback with a limp and an unusually pale, badly pock-marked face. Whenever I looked squarely at him he would blush and his face would then become a terra-cotta mask sprinkled with white blotches. This morning I was alone outside the city, at Bouzareaa, where I had gone to see the famous marabout, when I suddenly found the monstrosity standing beside me and heard him addressing me.

"Do not be alarmed," said he. "I will introduce myself at once. I am Léon Blandamour, merchant. I have taken my degree in mathematics and am the founder of the International Society of Applied Metaphysics. May I ask for ten minutes of your time?" Hereupon the hunchback pulled out a tarnished silver watch. "It is now nine thirty-six," he announced, and without waiting for an answer, he continued as follows:

"You are doubtless acquainted with the progress of metaphysics—with the scientific evolution of the old spiritism. I am sure you will recognize as authentic those supernatural occurrences which take place during what are improperly termed 'spiritistic séances.' The greatest scientists—your own William James among others—have examined them and recognized their authenticity. It is not necessary to believe in the reincarnation of the dead to admit that under certain circum-



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stances and through individuals possessing supernatural qualities, events do occur that are apparently miraculous and which the science of the past is unable to explain. Now it is not my purpose to convert you to spiritualism; I merely desire to explain to you, as a practical man, the principle that has led me to found my society.

"Certain facts, we will call them 'spiritistic,' do certainly exist, but up to this time no one has thought of turning them to account, of applying them to the needs of everyday life. In a word, what I propose to do is to link up industry with the occult.

"Take telepathy, for example. That is one of the surest and most firmly established of phenomena. Why not make it serve as a supplement to wireless telegraphy by training the most gifted subjects? You are surely aware that there are mediums capable of moving or raising even heavy objects without touching them; might not they become living motors if properly regulated? There are others who can read a letter that is enclosed in an envelope; these might be most usefully employed by the censor or in police offices. Other still more powerful mediums cause objects to pass through walls, which means that they dematerialize them so that the atoms can pass through the minutest pores of a solid obstacle, and then rematerialize them in their original form. This opens up a horizon in the field of scientific burglary.

"There are still more wonderful mediums who actually succeed in producing portions of living matter called 'ectoplasms.' When such a medium is in a state of trance human members and sometimes even a whole

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being will appear hovering about him; these are of a substance which is practically fluid, but nevertheless plainly visible. Such apparitions are called 'phantasms.' You may remember the anthropomorphic materializations of Katie King, who was Crookes' medium. For years I have made a study of the problem of preserving phantasms, and at last I have solved it. Up to the present these living apparitions have always faded away at the end of the séance, to the great detriment of science and also of human convenience. I have now succeeded in rendering them stable, durable, and practically immortal. If you like I will show you one who has been living in my house for nearly a year and has proved most useful to me. You can see that creatures of this sort, perhaps unreal yet alive and intelligent, would be greatly sought after the world over. To have at one's service a phantasm of the flimsiest possible substance, capable of penetrating where we cannot, of seeing and hearing what to us is dark and voiceless, of terrifying our enemies and of being the companion of our night vigils, a sort of intermediary between this world and the next, between life and death, between being and not being—to possess such a creature, generated differently from all others, a useful pseudo-being, free to do many things that others cannot, would be an unheard-of luxury, a piece of wonderful good-fortune. A limited company for the production and conservation of phantasms would pay tremendously.

"Industry has now monopolized, and is in command of, all the forces of nature save the most admirable one of all—the spirit. The vague and fleeting apparitions that have hitherto served only to satisfy the cu-



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riosity and vanity of psychiatrists, and the greed for the mysterious and emotional in occultists, may become instruments of well-being and progress, and prove useful to all. The race of phantasms, which has hitherto remained refractory, must now take its place in the scheme of universal economics. Modern man will then have commercialized, and will be able to exploit, the soul itself. Why should not you become the president of my board of directors? A few millions would suffice to enable this Trust of Substantial and Obedient Phantasms to take its place in the world's leading markets. If by chance you still harbor any doubts, I am ready to introduce you this very day to the first authentic product obtained by my method, and I trust you will condescend to test it. An impression I cannot explain leads me to conclude that this one is a female phantasm, but no sound issues from its lips—that is to say, from the shadowy line that represents the mouth in its vague, almost vaporous countenance. But its capacity to execute orders . . .”

At this point it was I who pulled out my watch and held it up to the hunchback. “It is already nine fifty-eight,” said I. “You have not kept your promise. I wish you good morning.” With that I turned my back upon him and hurried to my car, which was waiting for me near the marabout.

### BENRUBI'S VIEWS

*Geneva, July 30*

I HAD the following advertisement inserted in several newspapers:

“Wanted, a secretary who is polyglot, a philosopher, unmarried, patient, and a nomad. Inquire until July twentieth at Hotel Mon Repos, at ten P.M.”

I reflected that as I have recently been suffering from insomnia, I might well pass part of the night examining candidates. Sixty-three persons have applied. Of these sixty-three, forty-seven were Jews, and I have chosen a Jew—the candidate who impresses me as being the most intelligent of all.

Dr. Benrubi possesses all the qualities I advertised for and in addition several others of which I had not thought. He is a young man of small stature, inclined to be round-shouldered, with hollow cheeks, deep-set eyes, hair already sprinkled with gray, and a complexion like the green slime of a marsh. He was born in Poland, completed his early studies in Riga, took his degree in philosophy at Jena, that in modern philology in Paris, and has taught in Barcelona and Zurich. He looks very poor and his expression is that of a dog which, though anticipating a beating, is nevertheless conscious of its own importance. In the course of conversation I asked Benrubi how it is that Jews, who are usually so very intelligent, are at the same time so timid.

“Timid? You probably refer to that form of courage which is physical, material, and animal. As regards



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spiritual courage the Jews are not only courageous but actually daring. They have never been heroes in the barbaric sense, not even, I believe, in the time of David—but they were the first people to grasp the fact that the true valor of man consists in exercising his mind rather than in slaughtering others of his own species. Moreover, after they were dispersed, the Jews remained without a country, a government, or an army; they were mere groups of frightened individuals surrounded by multitudes who hated them. How could they be expected to develop the heroism of Crusaders or of captains of fortune?

"To escape annihilation they were forced to invent their own means of defense. Of these they possess two—money and intelligence. Jews do not love money. More than half of their literature, from the Prophets down, is devoted to glorifying the poor. But men are destroyed by iron and bought with gold. Unable as they were to make use of iron, the Jews protected themselves to the best of their ability with gold—that most beautiful, most noble of metals. Florins became their halberds, ducats their swords, sovereigns their arquebuses, and dollars their machine guns. Such weapons were not always efficacious, but from century to century they became ever more powerful, thanks to the way civilization shaped itself. The Jew, who became a capitalist in self-defense, now finds himself, owing to Europe's moral and mystical decadence, one of the earth's masters, and this against his own tendencies and purpose. In the beginning they forced him to become rich; then they proclaimed aloud that riches count more than anything else, so, his enemies

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themselves having willed it, the poor man of the Bible and the recluse of the ghetto is become the dominator of rich and poor alike.

"Those things which in the beginning were instruments of defense in time became instruments of vengeance. To my way of thinking intelligence is more powerful than gold. How could the Jew, downtrodden and spat upon, wreak vengeance upon his enemies? By lowering, shaming, exposing, and disestablishing the ideals of the *goyim*; by destroying those values upon which Christianity pretends to subsist. In fact, if you examine the question carefully you will see that Jewish intelligence has done nothing else for over a century except undermine and besmirch your most sacred beliefs, the columns that support the edifice of your thought. Ever since the Jews have been free to write without restriction, all your spiritual props have been in danger of collapse.

"German romanticism had created idealism and re-instated Catholicism, when along comes a little Jew from Düsseldorf—Heine by name—who devotes his merry and scathing genius to ridiculing romanticists, idealists, and Catholics.

"Men had always held that politics, morals, religions, and the arts were superior manifestations of the spirit, having no connection with purse or stomach, when suddenly there appeared a Jew from Treves, a certain Marx, who undertook to prove that all these idealistic matters have their origin in the loam and compost of a base economy.

"All men once regarded the genius as a divine being and the criminal as a monster, but presently there ap-



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peared upon the scene a Veronese Jew called Lombroso, who proved beyond a doubt that the genius is a half-crazed epileptic and that criminals are but ancestors of our own who have survived, that is to say, our cousins in the blood.

"At the close of the nineteenth century the Europe of Tolstoi, Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Verlaine was laboring under the delusion that it formed one of the great epochs in the history of humanity, but there arose a Jew from Budapest whose name was Max Nordau, who amused himself with demonstrating that your much-lauded poets are all degenerates and that your civilization rests on a foundation of lies.

"Every man is convinced that he is both a normal and a moral being, but here is a Jew from Freiberg in Moravia, a certain Sigmund Freud, who discovers that even in the most virtuous and distinguished of gentlemen there lies hidden a pervert, an incestuous being, a potential assassin.

"Since the days of the Courts of Love and of the *dolce stil nuovo* we have always regarded woman as an idol, a 'vessel of perfection'; but Weininger, a Viennese Jew, must have his say to demonstrate both scientifically and dialectically that woman is an ignoble and infinitely repugnant being, a very well of impurity and inferiority.

"The intellectuals, the philosophers, and others have always held that intelligence alone could lead to truth—intelligence, that crowning glory of man—but a Parisian Jew stood forth, Bergson by name, who by means of subtle and clever analyses robbed intellect of its primacy and demolished the age-old edifice of Pla-

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tonism, arriving finally at the conclusion that conceptualistic thought is incapable of grasping reality.

"The majority hold that religions are the work of an admirable coöperation between God and the highest attributes in man, but here is a Jew from St. Germain-en-Laye, one Salomon Reinach, who does his best to prove that they are merely the remains of the ancient taboos of savage tribes, systems of inhibitions supporting ideological superstructures of various kinds.

"Men believed they were living peacefully in a solid universe reposing on foundations of a time and a space that were separate and absolute, when up comes Einstein, a Jew from Ulm, to establish the fact that time and space are one and the same, that neither absolute space nor time exists, that everything rests on perpetual relativity, and that the out-of-date edifice of which modern science has been so proud must go by the board.

"Scientific rationalism was convinced that it had conquered thought and supplied the key to reality, but Meyerson, a Jew from Lublin, has banished this illusion. Rational laws, he says, never fit reality exactly; there will always remain a refractory and irreducible residuum that defies the pretended triumph of reasoning reason.

"But I might continue my list forever. I will not speak of politics and of how the dictator Bismarck had the Jew Lassalle for an opponent, of how Gladstone was outdone by the Jew Disraeli, of how Cavour had for his right-hand man the Jew Atom, Clémenceau the Jew Mandel, and Lenin the Jew Trotzky.

"Please observe that I have cited no obscure or sec-



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ond-rate names. Intellectual Europe of today is for the most part under the influence or, if you prefer to put it that way, the spell cast by the great Jews I have named. Although born in different regions and having pursued different branches of research, they one and all, Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, and Poles, poets and mathematicians, anthropologists and philosophers, have one common characteristic, one common purpose—to cast doubt upon recognized truths, to shake what is lofty, to besmirch what appears pure, to debase what seems stable, to cast stones at what is held in respect.

"This century-old practice of administering dissolvent poisons is the great Hebrew vengeance upon the Greek, the Latin, and the Christian worlds. The Greeks despised us, the Romans decimated our numbers and scattered us, the Christians have tortured and robbed us, and we, being too weak to defend ourselves by the sword, have carried out offensive operations of a persistent and corrosive nature against the pillars that support the civilization of Plato's Athens and that of the Rome of emperors and popes. And our vengeance has already compassed much. As capitalists we dominate the money markets, as thinkers we dominate the intellectual world, carrying on the work of disintegrating the old faiths, both sacred and profane, undermining revealed religion and laic creeds. The two extremes most to be feared are united in the Jew—in the kingdom of matter he is a despot, in that of the spirit he is an anarchist. You others are our servants financially and our victims intellectually. The race accused of having killed a God was determined to kill the idols of intellect, and of sentiment as well, and that race has

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forced you to your knees before the greatest idol of all, the only one that is left—Money. Our humiliation, which stretched from the Babylonian captivity to the defeat of Bar-cochba and continued in the ghettos until the days of the French Revolution, is being avenged at last. The pariah among nations may now give voice to a hymn in celebration of a twofold victory!"

Little Benrubi had been growing more and more excited as he talked. In their deep sockets his eyes shone, his fleshless hands sawed the air, his voice, which had been faint at first, now became piercing. Suddenly realizing that he had gone too far, he stopped abruptly and a long silence ensued. At last, in a low and timid voice, Dr. Benrubi again addressed me.

"Would you kindly advance me a thousand francs on my salary?" he asked. "I need a new suit, and must pay off a few small debts . . ." When I had given him the check he looked at me with an expression he sought to make insinuating, and said: "Do not take the paradoxes I have uttered too literally. The Jews are like that—they are far too fond of talking, and when they are once started they go on and on . . . and always end by offending some one. If I have offended you in any way I hope you will pardon me."



## TRYING THE INNOCENT

THREE weeks ago my Packard ran over and killed an old woman, and as her relatives demanded an indemnity out of all possible proportion to their loss—we all know the average value of women—I was obliged to call in a clever lawyer to defend me against these speculators in corpses.

The lawyer in question, Francis Malgaz by name, might be an ox-driver from the hills dressed up as a gentleman, as far as appearance goes. He is squarely built, badly proportioned, rough, bony, and bronzed. His head is enormous, his hands are large, his feet are gigantic, his eyes are bovine and his teeth equine. But on closer acquaintance you discover him to be a man of genius and wit, well educated and a good talker. I have spent more than one pleasant hour in his company. Last night, for example, he gave me his views on the subject of justice.

"Our system," he began, "is both complicated and absurd. We are still oppressed by the Roman law, which we have inherited. Roman law, with all its precautions and measurings, was the work of a lot of mistrustful and miserly peasants who regarded the punishing of crime as a matter of business. It is impossible to punish the crime, which is over and done with; all that can be achieved is to hold the criminal in confinement and thus prevent him from committing other crimes. When I read that so-and-so has been sentenced to three

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years, eight months, and twenty-seven days of imprisonment, I see the sentence in the light of a business deal. It would seem that the judges wish to make the guilty man *pay* for his act at a fixed rate, which is calculated to a fraction. When he has paid those years, months, and days the debtor will have canceled his debt and will come forth as innocent as before. This is a mistaken principle. A crime is *irreparable* and consequently can never be paid for, nor can it in any way be compensated for, because you cannot restore to the victim the peace he has forfeited, or perhaps even life itself.

"On the other hand, if the judge sifts the matter thoroughly, and this the age-long trials of the present day oblige him to do, he must come to realize that the accused—given his temperament, ideas, needs, passions, and all the rest—could not have avoided committing his crime. If we take psychology as a basis, every guilty person should be acquitted; if we consider the question of defending society, then every guilty person should be eliminated for all time. These minute gradations of punishment are illogical and archaic, and to my way of thinking trials are a mere waste of time.

"What really matters is to withdraw criminals from circulation without unnecessary hairsplitting or heavy expense. I would divide crimes into three categories—major, intermediate, and minor crimes—and to each category I would assign a single punishment. Crimes of the major category—patricide, high treason, and so forth—would be punished with immediate death; intermediate crimes—bodily injury, theft, fraud, and the like—with deportation for life; minor crimes—misap-



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propriation, defamation, and so forth—with the confiscation of property or a heavy fine to be paid in a lump sum and at once. Thus all tribunals, judges, clerks, juries, proceedings, and prisons—with all their governors and warders—would be abolished, and society would be as well protected as before at an immense saving of time and expense. Trials are no better than schools of delinquency, and prisons are hotbeds of criminality. A capable police-force could manage the whole matter. Once a criminal was caught it would be easy enough for the chief of police himself to establish the nature of his crime, and equally easy to dispose of him. He would either be put to death, banished, or made to pay—efficiency, speed, and economy! In a few years the cost of administering justice and the number of crimes committed would be greatly reduced.

“Not all trials, however, should be abolished; and who do you think the accused would be? The so-called ‘innocent.’ To try criminals is utter foolishness, but to try the innocent is the sacred duty of a state conscious of its responsibilities. When a crime has been committed neither the wisdom of judges nor the eloquence of lawyers nor the severity of jailers can change the fact that injury and offense have actually been perpetrated and that in no way can they be canceled. But at least half of all prospective crimes might be prevented if all those who are regarded as strictly upright and all those who boast of their honesty were subjected to surveillance and examination.

“Every borough should have a vigilance committee composed of psychologists and moralists, to which, when necessary, might be added a physician and a priest. This

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board would watch and, in certain cases, accuse all those (and their name is legion) whose way of life is calculated to expose them, sooner or later, to the temptations, the contagion, of crime. Everywhere there are notorious vagabonds, there are lazy people who have no fixed income, there are irascible, bloodthirsty, quarrelsome, prodigal, unbalanced, or passionate individuals. We all know people of this sort and feel that sooner or later they will come to a bad end—at least thirty per cent of them will. When a man has a fixed idea, for instance, or changes his trade with every changing season, or is inclined to be melancholy and suspicious, or indulges in excessive luxury, you may be sure it will not be long before he will commit some shameful or criminal act. Apparently he is perfectly respectable but in reality he is a delinquent *in fieri*. In such cases trials may be not only necessary but of great utility. Whereas in the case of the fully developed criminal they are inexpedient, in that of the prospective delinquent they are both expedient and profitable.

“Bring before the judge the violent, the libertine, the indolent, the avaricious; admonish and if necessary punish them. Deprive family tyrants of their rights as parents, operate for gallstones on those sensitive beings who are too quick to take offense, deprive wasters and spendthrifts of their money, bleed the overpassionate gently—and thousands of prospective crimes will be prevented. These prophylactic trials will prove the glory of the lawgiver and the triumph of the judge. Moral and social security will be attained not by means of costly and inconclusive trials of the guilty, but by precautionary trials of the innocent. The majority of



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criminals are men who only an hour ago not only appeared innocent, but actually were so in the eyes of the law. The supposedly innocent form a reserve that regularly produces the most atrocious malefactors. We must cease to confine our attention to outward acts, and give part of it to the conduct, opinions, mode of life, sentiments, and habits of each and every citizen. It will be found that no living being can be pronounced entirely guiltless after he has been subjected to a searching examination, both external and internal. To try a so-called innocent subject would often mean to save both him and ourselves from the crime he might be going to commit tomorrow."

While personally I may doubt the success of this system proposed by Malgaz and regard it as too open to abuse, yet I must acknowledge that it possesses a certain veneer of logic and sense. But would not its adoption imply the holding of at least twenty thousand trials in order to abolish one?



## EGOLATRY

Jena, July 8

IN THE Rest House at Blumenwald, where I went to get my tired nerves restored, I noticed on the very first evening a little crooked, limping man who carried his various deformities with a jaunty air. One of his eyes

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was hidden beneath a black band, his skull was shaped like a cone, his nose had been devoured by lupus and was become but a red scar, his mouth was concealed by a growth of tufts the color of dull copper. Yet this individual was more lively than any of the other guests, talked with everybody in a loud voice, and was to be met everywhere and at all times, his coming announced by the quick tapping of the stick he carried, which was shaped like a pastoral staff. I discovered that his name was Mündung and that, like three quarters of the Germans, he was the author of several books. On the day after my arrival he caught up with me while I was walking in the garden and made me sit down beside him on one of the benches.

"You are a foreigner," he began, in a voice too big for his body, "and you have probably come to Germany to learn. *Germania docet*. This country is the world's alma mater. Every city has its university; there is a teacher to every six inhabitants. Even in this shameful house, which is neither hotel, pension, hospital, nor sanatorium, not even an educational institution, but where an unscrupulous charlatan sells hope and sausages at a high price, you will find food for the spirit. You are undoubtedly acquainted with my name. I am Dr. Mündung; I hold a degree in *Religionsgeschichte*, am the author of a work on the esoteric doctrines of the Jezidis or devil-worshippers, of various *Betrachtungen* on the astral cult of the Hereros, and of a work, which has become a classic, on the prehistoric connection between the subterranean divinity of Phrygia and the Germanic goddess Frigga. If I am here, cut off from libraries and from my studies, it is because certain of



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my colleagues who are jealous of me have adopted this stratagem to stave off the danger—at least for a time—of having to compete with me for a chair at one of the universities. My wife, who is a Chinese and somewhat unfamiliar with the customs of her adopted country, allowed these men to persuade her, and . . . But I apologize for boring you with my private affairs. It is a mistake—heresy, in fact.

"I assure you, however, that even here at Blumenwald I have not wasted my time. For a student of the history of religions variety is invaluable; for mankind in general it is unprofitable. Attempts have been made to create a universal language, but no one has ever succeeded in inventing a religion that would be acceptable to all.

"The mistake lies in the fact that the nature of man has not been studied deeply enough. Man, all his hypocrisies and rhetorical outpourings notwithstanding, loves sincerely only himself, and respects and worships only his own ego. Fear or shame has taught him to feign veneration for the gods, for heroes, his country, humanity, and all the other ideals, historical or abstract, that fill the galleries of history. In reality these are to him but screens and pretexts behind which to hide his real beliefs. To arrive at establishing a truly universal and practical religion, which all would be glad to follow (should a daring prophet arise to preach it), that which is the psychological center of human conduct would have to be borne in mind.

"The new and definite religion I offer for mankind's acceptance is 'egolatry.' Every man will worship himself, every man will have his personal god—himself.

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Protestant reform boasted of making every man a priest—no longer were there to be intermediaries between creature and Creator. I go a step further. There are to be no intermediaries between adorer and adored. Every man is to be to himself his own god.

"Thus the advantages of polytheism and of monotheism are combined. Each man will have one god only, but the gods will be as many as there are men. There will be no danger of schisms, for the egolators, while acquiescing in the fundamental principle of the new religion, will never, for obvious reasons, be guilty of worshipping a strange god, that is, another creature of their own species.

"This religion is at once the supreme fruit of German idealism and of the most modern form of civilization. On a certain day, when Fichte, mounting the rostrum, made the announcement to his auditors: 'Today we will create God,' egolatry was practically founded. If God be a creation of our practical and ethical activities, that is to say, an offspring of the human mind, why worship Him as if He really existed outside ourselves, instead of worshipping His creator, man? If man be the father of God, if God have no existence save in the human mind, then in worshipping man we worship the true God, God absolute, the God no longer unknown. But it is impossible to worship mankind as a whole. *Menschheit* is an abstraction, a *flatus vocis*; authentic man is realized in the concrete individual, that is to say, in each one of us.

"Modern civilization, which has gradually destroyed the remains of transcendental phantasmagoria, has begun, unconsciously, to practice egolatry. Sport is



body-worship; the cult of science is a substituting of self for the omnipotence attributed to God; the cult of the machine is a supplementing of God's omnipotence. Little by little that which had seemed to appertain exclusively to the Perfect Being is become a prerogative of man.

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"I may tell you, between ourselves, that egolatri is now practiced unwittingly by the majority of mankind. There now remains only the matter of giving it a name, a creed, and a consciousness, and I shall make this my task as soon as I am quit of this den of poisoners.

"A question and answer to be found in the ancient Scandinavian saga of St. Olaf have always impressed me most deeply. The king asks a soldier, 'In whom do you believe?' And the answer is, 'In myself.' Brave words spoken by a brave hero! He who does not believe in himself is not alive. Religion and life, faith and practice, must be made to coincide. Other religions have failed because they demanded of man what was contrary to his nature. My religion, which conforms to man's open secret, will triumph without a struggle.

"You will tell me that some form of cult will be necessary, one suited to modern practicality. I have thought of that also. Every egolator will have his own statue made—in gold, bronze, or marble according to his means. If he is too poor to employ a sculptor he must be satisfied with a portrait in oils or even a good photograph. Before this image he will place offerings and recite his prayers. We shall find some admirable formulas for extolling self in the works of the idealists and in Walt Whitman's 'oneself' poems. The daily or

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weekly bath will be the equivalent of baptism; taking food will represent the communion; sleep, which is the temporary loss of consciousness of self, will take the place of penitence. As you see, it will be an easy and not overcomplicated religion. There is no other god than man, and every man is his own incarnation. There will be an end to the humiliation of bowing before a superior power, an end to the hypocrisy of denying our unconquerable instincts. Man loves himself. Let him confess it openly, boldly, and freely, and give his love a devotional and ritualistic aspect. You may rest assured that the twentieth century will be the era of egolatri."

As the small but garrulous monstrosity finished his rigmarole I looked closely at him, and my imagination showed him to me in adoration before a statue reproducing his own revolting countenance and misshapen body. I could not refrain from laughing, but Dr. Mündung seemed not to resent this.

"My religion," he concluded, "is a message of joy and not one of mortification. You have entered into the spirit of my undertaking and I trust you may become my prophet in your half of the world."

As he said this, he laid his tiny hands upon my knees as in an act of consecration. It was then that I noticed he had four fingers on one hand and six on the other.



## AN INTERVIEW WITH EINSTEIN

*Berlin, April 20*

EINSTEIN resigned himself to receiving me because I had been careful to inform him that only to him personally would I entrust one hundred thousand marks for the University of Jerusalem (Mount Scopus).

I found him playing the violin—his head is typically that of the musician. On perceiving me he laid down his bow and immediately began asking me questions:

"Are you a mathematician?"

"No."

"A physicist?"

"No."

"An astronomer?"

"No."

"An engineer?"

"No."

"A philosopher?"

"No."

"A musician?"

"No."

"A journalist?"

"No."

"A Jew?"

"No, not even a Jew," said I.

"Why are you so anxious to interview me, then?" he inquired. "And why are you making such a generous gift to the Hebrew university in Palestine?"

"I am ignorant, but anxious to learn," was my reply.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH EINSTEIN

"and my gift is but a pretext to gain admittance to you, and to hear you speak."

Einstein seemed to bore into me with his black eyes, which are those of an artist, and appeared to reflect. "I am grateful both for your gift and for your confidence in me," he said. "But you must see that it is next to impossible for me to tell you anything about my studies if, as you confess, you know nothing of mathematics or physics. I am in the habit of proceeding by formulae that are entirely incomprehensible to the uninitiate, and even among the initiate there are few who have been able to reach a perfect understanding of them. You will have to pardon me then, if . . ."

"I cannot believe," said I, "that a man of genius like yourself is unable to express himself in plain language. And as my ignorance does not signify a lack of intelligence . . ."

"Your modesty and desire to learn certainly deserve a reward," Einstein said, "and for once I will violate my rules in your favor. If some points remain obscure to you I can only apologize in advance. I will not touch on the two relativities I have formulated—all that is an old story, and you can read it for yourself in a hundred different volumes. Instead I will speak of the line of thought I am at present pursuing."

"By nature I am opposed to duality. Two phenomena or two conceptions that appear antithetical or different offend me. My mind has one supreme purpose—to eliminate differences. In so doing I am still faithful to science, which ever since the days of the Greeks has aimed at unity. In life, and in art also, if you look closely you will find it is the same. Love tends to make



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of two persons one sole being. Poetry by the perpetual use of metaphor, which assimilates different objects, presupposes the identity of all things.

"In the sciences this process of unification has made great strides. Since the days of Galileo and Newton astronomy has become a part of physics. Riemann, the real creator of non-Euclidian geometry, has reduced classic geometry to physics. The researches of Nernst and of Max Born have made chemistry a chapter in physics. And as Loeb has reduced biology to chemical facts, it is easy to see that biology itself is indeed but a paragraph in physics. Until recently, however, there existed in physics certain data that appeared to be irreducible, separate couples of values or of phenomenal collections. For example, time and space; the inert mass and the heavy, that is to say, the mass subject to gravitation; electrical phenomena and the magnetic, which in turn differ from those of light. Of recent years these couples have vanished and these distinctions have been suppressed. As you will remember, not only have I shown that absolute space and universal time have no meaning, but I have also established that space and time are indissoluble aspects of a single reality. Many years ago Faraday proved the unity of both electric and magnetic phenomena, and later the experiments of Maxwell and Lorentz resulted in the assimilation of light with electromagnetism. In modern physics, therefore, two fields only remain distinct—those of gravitation and electromagnetism. At last I have succeeded in proving that they also are but two aspects of a single unity. This is my latest discovery—the 'theory of the unitary field.' Henceforth space, time, matter, light, electricity,

#### AN INTERVIEW WITH EINSTEIN

inertia, and gravitation are but so many names for one same and homogeneous activity. All sciences are reduced to physics, and physics can now be reduced to a single formula. This formula in simple language would read more or less as follows: *Something moves*. These two words are the latest synthesis of human thought."

My expression must have betrayed my bewilderment. "Are you astonished," Einstein asked, "by the apparent simplicity of this supreme achievement, that thousands of years of research and of theories should have been needed to reach a conclusion that seems but a commonplace, expressing the most ordinary of experiences? I must admit you are not entirely unjustified in your astonishment. Yet the efforts in synthesis of so many scientific geniuses have led to this and to nothing more—*Something moves!* 'In the beginning was the Word,' said St. John. 'In the beginning,' Goethe retorted, 'was Action.' 'In the beginning and in the end was Movement,' say I. We know no more, can say no more. If this final fruit of human knowledge strikes you as being but a common crab-apple—it is not my fault. Something incredibly simple must inevitably result from so much reducing to unity."

I saw that Einstein was determined to say no more. He was evidently disinclined to confide the true secrets of science to a stranger, to one of the uninitiate. I was not credulous enough to believe, however, that this paltry formula did indeed represent the sum total of three centuries of thought. Not wishing to appear indiscreet and importunate, I handed him the hundred thousand marks I had promised and took a respectful leave of the renowned discoverer of relativity.



## AN INTERVIEW WITH FREUD

TWO months ago I bought in London a fine Greek marble of the Hellenistic period that—according to the archaeologists—represents Narcissus. Learning that Freud had completed his seventieth year the day before yesterday—he was born on May 6, 1856—I sent him the statue as a present, with a letter in which I paid homage to the “discoverer of Narcissism.” This well-chosen gift brought me an invitation from the patriarch of psychoanalysis. I have just come from his house and am setting down the main points of our conversation without delay.

Freud appeared somewhat weary and depressed. “These anniversaries,” he began, “are too much like commemorations and remind one too strongly of death.”

I was impressed by the shape of his mouth. It is a thick-lipped, sensual, somewhat sarcastic mouth, clearly expressing the theory of the libido. Freud seemed glad to see me and thanked me warmly for the statue.

“Your visit gives me great pleasure,” he said. “You are neither a patient, a colleague, a disciple, nor a relative! I live all the year round amongst hysterical or unbalanced people who make me the confidant of all their moral baseness—which is generally of the one sort—or with members of my own profession who envy me when they do not hold me in contempt, and with disciples who may be classed as chronic parrots or as

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ambitious schismatics. In you I find some one with whom I can speak freely at last. I have taught others the virtues of confession, but I have never myself been able to bare my own soul completely. It is true I have written a short autobiography, but more for purposes of propaganda than for any other reason, and although my *Traumbedeutung* may contain some fragments of a confession, yet no one knows or has guessed the real secret of my mission. Have you any knowledge of psychoanalysis?”

I replied that I had read some of his own works in the English translation, and that I had stopped in Vienna on purpose to see him.

“The world is of the opinion that I care most for the scientific side of my work and that my main purpose is the healing of mental diseases. This is a great mistake, which has prevailed for many years and which I have never succeeded in correcting. I am a scientist of necessity—not by vocation. My true nature is the artistic. As long as I can remember, Goethe has been my secret hero. As a child I longed to become a poet and all my life long I have wished to write a novel. All my talents were in the direction of literature, as my teachers themselves were forced to admit. But if you will recall what the state of literature was in Austria during the last quarter of the nineteenth century you will understand the difficulties that beset me. My people were poor, and poetry, as the most famous contemporary poets could testify, brought but scant returns and these returns too late. Moreover I was a Jew, which fact handicapped me in an anti-Semitic country. Heine’s exile and miserable end were also discouraging. Influenced always by



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Goethe, I chose the science of nature, but I remained by temperament a romantic. In 1884, in order to see my fiancée, who was absent from Vienna, a few days sooner, I bungled a piece of work on coca, thus affording others a chance to deprive me of the glory and profit of the discovery of cocaine as an anaesthetic.

"In 1885 and 1886 I was in Paris. In 1889 I spent some time at Nancy. My stay in France definitely influenced my mental attitude. It was not so much what I learned from Charcot and Bernheim as because at that time the world of French literature was extremely prolific and fervent. While I was in Paris my romantic temperament led me to spend hours on the towers of Notre Dame, but of an evening I frequented the cafés of the Latin Quarter and read the books that were being most talked of at the time. The literary battle was at its height. Symbolism had hoisted its flag against naturalism. The supremacy of Flaubert and Zola was being replaced, among the younger set, by that of Mallarmé and Verlaine. I had been but a short time in Paris when *A rebours* appeared, by Huysmans, a disciple of Zola who had gone over to the decadent school. I was still in France when Verlaine's *Jadis et naguère* was published, and Mallarmé's poems and the *Illuminations* by Rimbaud were collected. I am not telling you all this as a mere display of erudition, but because these three schools of literature—romanticism, which had recently expired, naturalism, which was threatened, and symbolism, which was in the ascendent—inspired all the work I have since accomplished.

"A man of letters by instinct and a physician by necessity, I conceived the idea of transforming one

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branch of medicine—psychiatry—into literature. I was and still am a poet and a writer of romance disguised as a scientist. Psychoanalysis is nothing but the transposition of a literary vocation into terms of psychology and pathology.

"The first impulse towards this discovery came, of course, from my beloved Goethe. You are doubtless aware that he wrote *Werther* to rid himself of a morbid obsession of grief; literature to him was catharsis. And in what does my method of treating the hysterical patient consist if not in making him tell everything in order to free himself from an obsession? I merely force my patients to do what Goethe did. Confession is liberation, which signifies a cure. The Catholics have known this for centuries, and as Victor Hugo had taught me that the poet is also a priest, I willingly assumed the functions of a confessor. I had taken the first step.

"I soon found that my patients' confessions were forming a valuable collection of 'human documents.' This means that I was doing precisely what Zola had done. Out of such documents he made novels—I was constrained to keep them to myself. Decadent poetry then called my attention to the similarity between the dream and the work of art, and the importance of symbolic language. Thus psychoanalysis was born not, as has been said, of the suggestions of Breuer, of hints contained in the works of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, but of the scientific transposition of the literary schools I loved.

"But let me explain more clearly. Romanticism, which in resuming the traditions of mediaeval poetry



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had proclaimed the supremacy of passion to that of love, suggested to me the idea of sexuality as the point around which human life centers. Influenced by writers of the naturalist school, I gave love a less sentimental and mysterious interpretation, indeed, but the principle remained the same.

"The naturalist school and especially Zola had accustomed me to observe closely the most repugnant but at the same time the most common side of human life, namely, sensualism and desire underlying the hypocrisy of good manners—in a word, the animal in man. And my discoveries of the shameful secrets the subconscious mind conceals are but the corroboration of Zola's outspoken act of accusal.

"Symbolism in its turn taught me two things—the value of dreams in inspiring works of poetry and the part played in art by the symbol and by suggestion—that is, the dream made manifest. It was then that I set about writing my great book on the interpretation of dreams as revealing the subconscious, that same subconscious which is the source of inspiration. I learned from the symbolists that every poet must create his own language and I myself have created a symbolic vocabulary of dreams, the 'oneiric' idiom.

"To complete the list of my literary sources I must mention that my classical studies, in which I always stood at the head of my class, led me to consider the myths of Oedipus and of Narcissus; they taught me through Plato that ecstasy, which is a manifestation of the subconscious, is the basis of spiritual life, and finally, through Artemidorus, that every fancy of the night has its hidden meaning.

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"The fact that my culture is essentially literary is abundantly demonstrated by my many quotations from Goethe, Grillparzer, Heine, and other poets. My intellectual tendency is towards the essay, the paradoxical, the dramatic, and has nothing of the pedantic and technical austerity of the true scientist. Irrefutable corroboration of this lies in the fact that wherever psychoanalysis has penetrated it has been more readily understood and accepted by writers and artists than by physicians. In fact my books read far more like works of the imagination than treatises on pathology. My studies of daily life and of witty sayings are literature pure and simple, and in *Totem and Tabu* I have actually tried my hand at the historical novel. My earliest and most cherished ambition was—and has always remained—to be a writer of romance, and I am in possession of a quantity of material sufficient to make the fortune of a score of novelists. But I fear it is too late for me to begin now.

"However, I have succeeded at least in circumventing my fate, for I have realized my dream of remaining the man of letters while appearing before the world as the physician. All great scientists have something of the leaven of fancy, the mother of all ingenious intuitions, but no one has ever attempted, as I have done, to translate the inspirations afforded by the currents of modern literature into scientific theories. In psychoanalysis the three leading literary movements of the nineteenth century, rendered into scientific jargon, meet and complete each other: Heine, Zola, and Mallarmé are united in my person under the patronage of my dear old Goethe. No one has ever called attention



to this obvious mystery, nor should I have explained it if you had not had the happy thought of making me a present of Narcissus."

At this point the conversation took another turn. We talked of America, of Keyserling, and even of the way Viennese women dress. But all that was worth putting on paper I have written down above. As I was leaving Freud requested me to keep his confession to myself.

"Fortunately you are neither a writer nor a reporter," he said, "and I feel sure you will not divulge my secret."

I reassured him on this point as, indeed, I could do in all honesty, for these notes are not intended for publication.



## THE NEW SCULPTURE

*Munich, June 8*

I NEVER visit artists' studios, because they bore me, because I never know what to say, because you nearly always see the same things, because all artists regard me as a mere writer of checks, as the ignorant and gullible patron of art. But the other day I allowed myself to be tempted by a Czechoslovakian sculptor who is very young, is as yet unknown to fame, is an albino, and is named Matiegka.

"Do come," he pleaded. "I will show you what you

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will never see in any gallery or exhibition. After thousands of years I have introduced a new style in sculpture, one that has never before been practiced."

When he had admitted me he ushered me into a room higher than it was broad, a sort of well with a few chairs and without windows. With the exception of a few the floor, the room was empty. It contained neither trestles, plaster casts, models, nor marbles—nothing, in fact, that could mark the place as a sculptor's studio.

"Is this where you work?" I inquired. "Sit down. This is where I work," Matiegka replied. "I am and confess your amazement, I told you I had succeeded in creating that which is never seen. I am really a sculptor, but not in the ordinary way, not like all others. The ancient, massive, heavy style of sculpture we inherited from the Egyptians and Assyrians has had its day. It was in keeping with religious, monarchical, slow, and primitive civilizations. Today we are skeptical, anarchical, dynamic, cinematographic. Sculpture must change with the times. Today to make statues of marble, of stone, of bronze or even of silver or wood, is like traveling in Pharaoh's chariots or wearing Bayard's armor. First of all, the material must be altered. To model statues in snow as Michelangelo did in the courtyard of the Medici Palace, or in wax as Medardo Rossi did, was already a step in the right direction, but a step not sufficiently bold. Have you never watched children shaping figures in the sand? Have you never happened to see an artistically inclined ice-cream maker modeling in ice cream or sculpturing in an ice? Such as these have been my teachers.



### THE NEW SCULPTURE

"The only possible salvation for the plastic art lies in passing from the immobile to the ephemeral. That most perfect of all arts, music, stirs you, passes, and vanishes. Sound is instantaneous, it never tarries, yet it is very powerful. All other arts aspire towards music, and sculpture also must strive to approach this divine evanescence. I will now proceed to give you an illustration of my art."

As he said this, Matiegka's delicate hands uncovered the tripod that stood in the center of the room, and deposited a lump of dark paste on it, to which they presently set fire. Soon a dense black smoke soared straight upwards from the brazier. The fantastic sculptor, taking a species of broad ladle in either hand, started to work rapidly, revolving around the cone-shaped column of smoke and using arms and breath as well as the two instruments. In less than a minute the dark column had assumed the shape of a human being—of a gray phantom that every instant threatened to dissolve. At the top the soaring mass had tapered to resemble a head, and by a stretch of the imagination one could distinguish a shadowy nose and an excuse for a mouth. The smoke, which was thick and greasy, like that worn-out locomotives belch forth when standing still, was easily cut through by the slashing ladles. Matiegka, who by now was very pale, lay about him like one possessed, now dividing the smoke that tended to join the two legs together, now blowing lightly against the airy statue's shoulders to give them a more natural line, now dispersing the vaporous cloud that blurred the lines of the figure. He drew back at last and coming towards me shouted:

### AGAINST THE HEAVENS

"Look at it! Make haste! Let the form stamp itself on your memory! In a few seconds the statue will have vanished like a dying melody!"

In fact, as the smoke spread the figure changed shape—the phantom lost its outline and melted away in a gray mist that slowly disappeared through an opening in the glass roof.

"The masterpiece is dead, as all masterpieces must die!" cried Matiegka. "But what does that matter? I can make as many more as I wish. Each work is unique and sufficient to fill a single minute with delight. What difference does it make with respect to what is eternal, whether a statue lasts ten centuries or ten seconds, if both the work in marble and that in smoke must eventually disappear?"

I left Matiegka to his enthusiasm after saying what I could in praise of the undeniable originality of his art. On returning to the hotel I reflected that this new sculpture certainly does possess one advantage in the eyes of the parsimonious patron, for since it can be neither preserved nor transported, it cannot be purchased.



### AGAINST THE HEAVENS

*St. Moritz, August 2*

THE sky annoys me. At times, frequently indeed, it causes me real suffering. Then I cannot even bear to



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look at it because I am unable to avenge myself upon it in any way, or to strike a blow at it. I feel myself akin to the Scythians, who used to shoot their arrows against the sun and the clouds. In short, to be perfectly frank about it, at least to myself, I hate the sky, and with the worst form of hatred—that of utter impotence.

It is not that I love the earth too fondly. The earth is circumscribed, filthy, monotonous, and overpopulated with lumps of clay possessing the power of speech, which lumps are a blot upon it and render it more odious still. But here, at least, we feel ourselves at home; we are free to do, to make and unmake, to move about at will. There are times when we can even force the earth to obey us. Here and there we succeed in reducing it to the state we desire; we obtain grain where once were rocks or marshes; we create artificial rivers; we remove mountains and separate continents.

But the sky is far away, is vastly distant, is unchanging, is hostile. We have no power over the sky. Even the lowest atmospheric strata are independent of our wishes. We must suffer every wind that blows, wait upon the pleasure of the rain, endure weeks on end of torrid heat. We are helpless against hail; the most we can accomplish is to attract some stray thunderbolt from time to time.

Neither the balloon nor the airplane has rendered us less impotent with regard to the lower sky. We may be able to race through the air, but we are none the less at the mercy of hurricanes, typhoons, whirlwinds, and fogs. At most we succeed in rising to a height of three

#### AGAINST THE HEAVENS

or four miles, which is always less than the height of the loftiest mountain.

What arouses my fiercest hatred, however, is the upper sky. I can tolerate for its usefulness the stupid sun with its fiery, pock-marked face—but the stars at night! The infinite does not confound me; I find it merely repugnant and offensive. The earth is sufficient to make me sense my own insignificance. The challenge of the starry sky is out of all proportion, is arrogant, is shameful. What have they to do with me, those millions of suns that look to me like so many scattered particles of electric light? What do they want? Of what use are they to me? Why do they come back night after night, these millenary flames, to insult the brevity of my days in this dark corner? The sky is a perpetual and unbearable insult. The stars know me not, nor can I ever do anything for or against them. When I have learned how many millions of years of light separate me from them, and how many centuries their rays take to reach the earth, I have but transformed my antagonism into a mathematical fact.

To me the sky is foreign and remote, therefore hostile. Comets that trail their tails across the infinite without any apparent purpose tell me nothing that can help me. The nebulae, those chaotic masses of cosmic dust, exasperate me, as do all things shapeless and unfinished. As for the planets and their satellites—those flatterers whose fire is dead, revolving and fawning eternally for the sake of a little light—they do but disgust and anger me.

I cannot understand astronomers. How is it that they do not go mad or commit suicide? They must indeed



AGAINST THE HEAVENS

be men without imagination or self-respect, and incapable of understanding the perpetual insults of the constellations entrenched in the wastes of space. By their measurings and calculations they perhaps persuade themselves that they rule the heavens, or at least that they are admitted there as guests.

The true man, however, can but experience a sense of rage and terror in the presence of these depths strewn with traveling fires.

The heavens have power over me, but I can never have power over the heavens. If I contemplate them they shame me; if I ignore them they punish me. They have a solemn, mysterious life of their own, which I can in no way alter or disturb. Against my will they suggest mortifying thoughts, which pain me, weigh me down, and rob me of the courage to live.

Therefore I prefer not to see the sky. I love those seasons and regions where the sky is always overcast, where night is mute and darkness complete, and the mists press upon one like a protecting and familiar coverlet. I envy the inhabitants of Venus, for, according to all accounts, their planet is almost enveloped in vapor. They are spared the exasperating pageant of those useless constellations and of that odious Milky Way which sweeps across the heavens like a river of phosphorescent scorn.

Poets, who indeed are little better than foolish children, go into an ecstasy over these roving fireflies of the infinite. To me, who fortunately or unfortunately am neither a rhymester nor a mystic, the sky is but the sinister screen on which I read, night after night, the confirmation of my hopeless nothingness.

## AMUSEMENTS

*Berlin, November 18*

NOT even in this city, which has robbed Paris itself of the primacy in night life and in European vice, can I find amusement. Berlin is a small town that believes itself to be immense, where all tastes are tolerated and corruption itself is most admirably organized.

I have tried opium and it merely reduces me to a state of idiocy. Alcoholic drinks turn me into a revolting lunatic. Cocaine makes a beast of a man and shortens his life. Hashish and ether are fit only for belated and commonplace followers of the decadent schools. Dancing is but sweating stupefaction. Gambling revolts me as soon as I have lost a million or two—it is an emotion that is too common and overcostly. At music halls one always finds the same troop of “girls,” all of them painted, half naked, odious, and identical. The “cinema” is a horror, fit only for the lower classes.

Speed in car or airplane is amusing at first, but soon one begins to regard it as absurd; one can see nothing and arrives in a state of imbecility at a place one can hardly wait to get away from. The theater is an amusement for the aged and for snobs who affect aestheticism. At a concert you may, from time to time, hear something that will make you forget yourself (a most desirable experience indeed), but it is torture to have to sit and listen to a long program surrounded by a herd of humans feigning ecstasy when they are really



thinking who knows what stupid or impure thoughts  
To enjoy sport you must be young, easily pleased, and  
a primitive.

#### AMUSEMENTS

I long for a wine that is different, for a theater  
that is a marvel, for a form of sport that is more tragic,  
for an opiate that shall change my ego for all time.  
Mankind is satisfied with so little! A little painted  
flesh, a little artificial excitement, a few old pictures,  
a few sounds often heard before, spurious emotion,  
bestial unconsciousness . . .

I am rich enough to have everything, but everything  
bore me. The Epicurean resources of a great city re-  
mind me of the games of silly, spoiled children. To me  
they have no flavor. Men like Caligula and Kafur may  
have amused themselves—I cannot. Money is not  
enough—one must possess the faculty, and also ingenu-  
ousness. But perhaps, after all, they too were bored.  
Putting others to death is less thrilling than the Platon-  
ic assassin imagines. Even sadism ends in satiety  
—it is the offspring of boredom and cannot slay its  
mother. I imagine Tiberius and Gilles de Raiz were  
sadder after their orgies than before.

Yet I must invent something. It is incredible that a  
man like myself, possessed of millions and entirely  
without scruples, should be bored. The amusements the  
world has to offer lead to imbecility or insanity, to  
tedium or death. I will have nothing to do with them.  
I must find for myself or in myself a new form of  
amusement, a form of delight as yet unknown. Shall  
I succeed?

This Berlin, meanwhile, is but a false New York,  
without the ocean indeed, but with scraps of Mont-

THE STAGE WITHOUT ACTORS  
matre and of Babylon throw in for the use of pedantic  
lovers of ancient forms of amusement, who have no time  
to waste.



#### THE STAGE WITHOUT ACTORS

*Moscow, March 30*

A FEW days ago an engineer from Pittsburgh, who  
is the agent here for an American firm, took me to a  
night club that is at once a tavern, a café, a theater,  
and a gambling-house. You can drink, smoke, and be  
bored here, as you can everywhere. Every now and then  
a female, badly painted and badly dressed, pops out  
from behind a red curtain and bursts into a song that  
is sadder even than her own depraved countenance.  
Or an overgrown abortion of the male gender, in yellow  
trousers, purple waistcoat, and scarlet jacket—a com-  
bination of the clown out of a job, the consumptive dip-  
somatic, and the revolutionary poet—shouts out a  
string of blackguardisms in blank verse, which the na-  
tives receive with indifference or handclapping. The  
whole thing is sinister and dismal.

Fortunately, soon after midnight a friend (?) of  
my companion came to sit at our table, a young Rus-  
sian who has traveled half round the world, who speaks  
three or four languages, has been a professional dancer,  
an actor, a scene-painter, a critic, a playwright, and  
probably also a spy. His ruling passion, however, is



the stage, and he at once started discoursing of this his fixed idea in most extravagant terms.

"Here with us," he began, "and also in Germany, many of the rotten bourgeois are wearying their brains trying to reform the theater, but no one has reached the logical madness of the essential reform. The theater should not be an *imitation* of real life, but an exact reproduction of life. Consequently the first step in reform must be to do away with all professional actors. Radical realism, which is the basic formula of the proletarian era, cannot tolerate immoral deception even on the stage. What the poet has written must be carried out to the letter, seriously, without trick or make-believe. A system of clever lying is unworthy of the new era. If I give *Julius Caesar*, the actor who takes the part of Caesar must really be stabbed with a real dagger, that is to say, he must really die. And in the *Merchant of Venice* the female who acts Desdemona must actually be suffocated with a pillow. No more blood made of red ink, no more faked corpses. The blood must be real human blood and the corpses must no longer be carried behind the scenes only to come to life again at the first burst of applause, but go straight to the mortuary chapel.

"You will understand, I am sure, that we can no longer employ professionals, for those cowardly beings cling to life. Certain parts should be given to criminals under sentence of death or to persons who have made up their minds to commit suicide and who magnanimously lend their services for the amusement of the masses.

"No imitation, however ingenious, can ever take the

place of the real thing. The rôle a man fills in life, that he must also fill on the stage. If I needed a general I would call upon one who has been retired or cashiered, or at least secure a colonel; if a pope is needed in a play, I could easily obtain priests by the dozen, and the same is true of merchants, gentlemen, and peasants. As it might be difficult, however, to obtain kings and emperors, I would exclude from my repertory all plays in which crowned heads appear. The tragedy of *Hamlet*, for example, would lose nothing of its solemnity if instead of taking place at the court of Denmark the action were transported to the villa of some aristocratic family.

"The theater's salvation lies in the one word 'authenticity.' Consequently the stage will not be purified and freed from the shameful dry-rot of fraud and falsehood that now encompasses it, *until all actors have been ostracized*. The stage was great when the people themselves acted the mystery plays in the Middle Ages. Antoine and Copeau understood the necessity for excluding actors, but they stopped halfway. Their interpreters gradually became professionals, and even worse. Comedians and tragedians are the two malignant growths that afflict the stage, and until they are removed we shall not witness the regeneration of this substitute for the temple."

I made the timid suggestion that in this way all works of the imagination—which in Shakespeare and Gozzi has certainly given us masterpieces—would be banished from the stage.

"Radical and absolute realism," this enemy of actors went on, "must be rigorously applied in all cases



## AN INTERVIEW WITH LENIN

of representations dealing with the life of man. There is a means of satisfying the demands of imagination (which indeed, it will be well to make use of) by composing scenic action in which no human beings appear. I confess I myself have begun to plan for this. I have written an 'impossibility in four acts,' in which the characters are angels, demons, ghosts, shades, animated idols, voiceless centaurs, talking machines, and monkeys. Not a single man or woman! Yet there is not one director either here or in Berlin who is willing to stage my *Circuit of Nullity*. If you remain in Moscow and are ready to spend half a million cveronetz to get it produced, I will gladly dedicate it to you. It is the first work on *transhuman* lines, and at cost of a trifling sacrifice you would share my glory."

Seeing that the conversation was about to take an unpleasant turn, I told my friend I was tired and wished to return to my hotel. The young enthusiast followed us even into the car, nor would he leave us until I had given him the sum he needed to get his "impossibility" printed.



## AN INTERVIEW WITH LENIN

Moscow, July 8

I HAVE been trying for more than a month and at last I have succeeded. I came to Russia for the sole purpose of seeing this man and I would not leave with-

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out having heard him speak. In his own line he seems to me to be one of the three or four men now alive who are really worth listening to. It has cost me nearly twenty thousand dollars to reach him—presents to the wives of commissaries, tips to Red soldiers, gifts to orphanages—but I do not regret the expense.

They told me that Vladimir Ilyitch was ill, that he was tired, that he could see no one but his most intimate friends. He does not live in Moscow now but in a suburb, where he occupies a fine old villa with a peristyle supported on white columns at the entrance. But on Friday night the last difficulties were overcome and the telephone informed me that I was expected on Sunday. They had told Lenin that my capital might be useful to him in the present early stage of the Nep, whereupon he consented to see me.

I was received by his wife, a fat and silent woman who scrutinized me as a nurse scrutinizes a new patient who is entering her ward. I found Lenin on a small porch, seated at a large table covered with great sheets of drawing-paper. He looked like a condemned criminal who is being allowed to amuse himself in peace during his last hours. His head, which every one knows from his photographs, is Mongolian in shape and looks as if it had been fashioned out of some dry old cheese. A grim row of teeth showed between dirty lips. The vast and naked skull resembles nothing so much as a sort of barbaric box made from the frontal of some fossilized monster. Two cunning and inquisitive eyes, like those of some solitary bird, seem to be flattened beneath inflamed lids. His hands toyed with a silver pencil, and it was evident that they had once been



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fleshy and strong—the hands of a peasant—but their present emaciation might well be taken as a premonition of approaching death. I shall never forget his ears, which seemed carved out of discolored ivory, and which strained forward as if to catch the last sounds of this world before the coming of the great silence.

The first moments of our interview were somewhat trying. Lenin was examining me carefully but with an air of abstraction, as if merely obeying a habit that no longer called for close attention, and I, in the presence of that saffron-colored, weary mask, lacked the courage to voice the questions I had come to ask. Finally I blundered at random through a compliment on the great work he had accomplished in Russia, whereupon the skin of his corpse-like countenance contracted into a network of ghostly wrinkles that finally resolved themselves into a sardonic grin.

"But everything was done already," Lenin exclaimed with an animation that was unexpected and vaguely alarming. "Everything had been done before I arrived. Foreigners and imbeciles believe that something new has been accomplished here, but that is merely an error on the part of the blind bourgeois. The Bolsheviks have but adopted and developed the régime established by the czars, which is the only one that suits the Russian people. It is not possible to govern a hundred million brutes without the club, spies, the secret police, terror, the gallows, military tribunals, prisons, and torture. We have simply changed the class whose hegemony was founded on this system. It was composed of sixty thousand nobles and perhaps forty thousand bureaucrats

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—one hundred thousand individuals all told. Today it consists approximately of two million proletarians and communists. This is an improvement, a great improvement, because the privileged class is ten times more numerous. Ninety-eight per cent of the population, however, have gained but little by the change. You may assume, indeed, that they have gained nothing at all, and that is precisely as it should be, is precisely what I desire, and was, moreover, absolutely inevitable."

Here Lenin laughed softly to himself, like a shopkeeper who has cheated a customer and chuckles gleefully behind the back of his departing victim.

"But then . . . ?" I ventured. "Then what of Marx and progress and all the rest of it?"

Lenin looked sharply at me with an air of surprise. "To you, a man of position and a foreigner, we can confess the truth," he said. "No one would believe you even if you did repeat it. Remember, it was Marx himself who taught us the purely instrumental and fictitious value of theories. Considering the state Russia and Europe were in, I was obliged to make use of the communist ideology to achieve my true purpose. In another country and at another time I might have used a different doctrine. After all, Marx was nothing but a bourgeois Jew who had climbed to the top on the ladder of English statistics and was a secret admirer of industrialism. He lacked the savage sense and was therefore no more than one third of a man, with a brain soaked in beer and Hegelianism, into which his friend Engels injected a few clever ideas. The Russian revolution is a complete refutation of Marx' prophecies.



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Where the real bourgeois hardly existed at all, there communism has triumphed.

"Men, Mr. Gog, are timid savages who need an unscrupulous savage to dominate them—a being like myself. All the rest is talk, literature, philosophy, and such-like rubbish, fit only for fools. Now as savages are no better than delinquents, the highest ideal of every government should be to reduce the country to one great penal establishment. The old czarist catanga is the last word in political wisdom. You will admit that as a matter of fact prison life is that best suited to the general run of men. Not being free, they are exempt from the risks and anxieties of responsibility and in a position that prevents the perpetration of evil. As soon as a man enters a prison he must perforce begin leading a blameless life. Moreover, he has no cares, no worries, for others think and plan for him. His body labors but his mind reposes. He knows that he will always be fed and have a place to sleep even if he does not work, even when he is ill, and this without the trouble the free individual must face to make sure of a loaf every morning and a bed every night. It is my ambition to convert Russia into a vast penitentiary; but do not imagine that in this I am swayed by selfish motives, for in such a system the real slaves, those most sorely tried, are the head jailers and the prison warders."

Lenin lapsed suddenly into silence and began studying a drawing that lay before him. To me it seemed to represent a lofty building like a tower, pierced by innumerable round windows. I hazarded one of my questions. "What about the peasants?" I inquired.

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"I hate the peasants," Vladimir Ilyitch replied, with an expression of deep loathing. "I hate the muzhik, who has been idealized by that driveling Westerner Turgenev and that hypocritical, converted faun known as Tolstoi. The peasants stand for everything I detest—the past, faith, heresy, religious enthusiasm, manual labor. I tolerate them, I even flatter them, but I hate them. I should like to see the last of them, one and all. To my way of thinking one clever electrician is worth a hundred thousand peasants."

"I hope we shall reach the point of being able to live on food produced in a few minutes by the machines of our chemical factories; we should then be able to murder all the peasants as being of no further use. They will either have to turn laborers or perish. To live by nature is primordial and disgraceful."

"You must get it clearly into your head that Bolshevism stands for a threefold war—that of the scientific barbarian against the rotten intellectual, that of East against West, that of the city against the country. Nor shall we be particular in the choice of our weapons in waging these wars. The *individual* is a thing that must be suppressed—an invention of those time-wasting Greeks and of visionary Teutons. Any one attempting resistance will be extirpated like a malignant growth. Blood is the best fertilizer nature provides."

"You must not conclude from all this that I am cruel. All these shootings and hangings which are carried out at my command, bore me. More than for any other reason I hate the victims because they oblige me to kill them, but I have no alternative. I dream of becoming the governor general of a model penitentiary, of a



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peaceful and well-managed penal settlement. But as in every prison, there will always be the rebellious and the restless, who are stupidly homesick for old ideologies and homicidal mythologies. All such must be suppressed. I cannot allow a few thousand tainted beings to compromise the future happiness of millions. All things considered, the old fashion of bloodletting was not a bad remedy, after all. There is a certain voluptuous satisfaction in feeling oneself master of life and death. Since the old God was slain—I know not whether in France or Germany—man has arrogated to himself certain sources of satisfaction. I myself, if you like, am a sort of demigod, camping between Asia and Europe, and I may surely satisfy a few of my small caprices. There are forms of pleasure of which the secret was lost after the downfall of the pagan world. There was something to be said for human sacrifice; for example, it was a lofty symbol, it conveyed a solemn lesson, and it afforded a pretext for wholesome festivals. Instead of the psalm-singing of the faithful the cries of prisoners and of the dying are wafted to me, and I assure you I would not exchange this symphony for all of Beethoven's nine. It is the canticle that announces approaching beatitude."

Lenin's cadaverous and ravaged countenance seemed to strain forward as if he were listening to some silent and solemn music that he alone could hear. At this point Mrs. Krupskaya came in to say that her husband was tired and must rest. I left without delay.

It has cost me nearly twenty thousand dollars to see this man, but to tell the truth, I do not feel the money has been wasted.

## NOTHING IS MY OWN

*Arosa, September 18*

THE greatest problem for an individual, as for nations, is independence. Can it be solved? What I possess seems to be mine, but I am always possessed by what is mine. The only incontestable possession would appear to be self, but if we sift the matter carefully, where is the absolute and isolated residuum that has no relation to any one?

Others, whether they be absent or present, have their part in our inner and outward life. There is no escaping this. Even in surroundings of the most complete solitude I shudder to feel myself an atom forming part of a hill, one cell of a culture, a drop of the sea. In my mind as in my flesh there lurks my heritage from the dead; for thought I am indebted alike to the living and the dead; my conduct is regulated, even against my will, by beings I do not know or whom I hold in contempt.

Everything I know I have learned from others. Whatever thing I use is the work of others—for that I have paid for it does not alter this fact. Without the workman, the artisan, and the artist I should go more naked than Caliban or Robinson Crusoe. When I wish to move I must use machines I have not made myself, which are guided by hands that are not my own. I am forced to speak a language I have not invented; and I am unconsciously constrained to adopt



the tastes, sentiments, and prejudices of the generations that have preceded me.

Nothing is my own. If I take this self apart, I invariably discover pieces and fragments that are of extraneous origin. I could actually attach a tag to each. This is my mother, this my first friend, this is Emerson, this Rousseau or Stirner; and when I have gone through the entire inventory of appropriations, self is reduced to an empty form, to a mere word without any intrinsic meaning.

I belong to a class, a people, a race; never, no matter what I may do, can I escape from limitations that are not of my own creating. Every thought is an echo, every act a plagiarism. I may avoid the actual presence of my fellow men, but the majority, though invisible, go on living in my solitary self.

If I have servants I must bear with them and obey them; friends I must tolerate and write to; money must be looked after, cared for, protected, defended. Power is the equivalent of slavery. Nothing actually belongs to me. The few pleasures I enjoy I owe to the inspiration and labor of men who are no more or whom I have never seen. I know what I have received but I am ignorant of what I have given.

I have succeeded in accumulating several hundred millions; this I could never have done if millions of men had not needed what I could sell, if thousands of men had not invented the formulae, machines, and rules by which the world's economic life is established. Left to myself, I should have been a mere savage, living on roots and dead dogs.

Where then is the deep-seated, autonomous nucleus, whereof no other being is a part, which no other being

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generated, and which I may really call my own? Am I indeed but a conglomerate of debts, the molecular slave of a gigantic body? And is the one thing we deem truly our own—self—like all the rest only a simple reflection, a delusion due to pride?



## THE PURCHASE OF A REPUBLIC

*New York, March 22*

THIS month I have bought a republic. I have satisfied a costly caprice to which I shall not yield a second time. It was a desire I had long cherished and at last I determined to rid myself of it. I fancied that to own a country would afford greater satisfaction than is actually the case.

A good occasion offered and the matter was quickly settled. The President was up to his neck in difficulties and his cabinet, composed of his own dependents, was in a precarious position. The treasury of the republic was empty and to impose fresh taxes would have been the signal for the overthrow of the entire party in power and perhaps even for revolution. A certain general was already arming a band of irregulars and promising posts and positions to all and sundry.

An American agent, who was on the spot, informed me of all this. The minister of Hacienda rushed on to New York, and in four days the affair was arranged. I



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advanced several million dollars to the republic and also granted the President, all members of the cabinet, and their secretaries salaries twice as large as those they had been receiving from the state. As a guarantee I was given the customs and state monopolies, but the people were not informed of this. The President and his ministers, moreover, signed a secret covenant that practically gives me full control of the entire republic. Although when I go there I shall figure only as a passing visitor, in reality I am master of the whole country. A few days ago I was obliged to grant a further and fairly heavy subsidy for renewing the army equipment, but I obtained fresh privileges in exchange.

What is going on I find most amusing. The Chambers continue to legislate with apparent freedom of action; the citizens still imagine that the republic is autonomous and independent and that the course of events is controlled by their will. They are unaware that everything they deem their own—life, possessions, civil rights—is at the undisputed disposal of a foreigner who is unknown to them, that is to say, of myself.

I am free at any time to order the dissolution of Parliament, the reforming of the constitution, the doubling of duties, the expulsion of immigrants. If I so desire I may reveal the secret dealings of the *camarilla* now in power, and thus throw out the entire government, from the President to the most humble secretary; nor would it even be impossible for me to force the country I have in hand into a war with one of the neighboring republics.

This hidden but unlimited power has afforded me

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many hours of pleasure. To suffer all the worry and slavery of the comedy of politics is wearisome beyond endurance, but to be the man behind the scenes who amuses himself with pulling the wires attached to a party of marionettes that obey his every movement—that is a fascinating occupation. It supplies agreeable food for and ample justification of my contempt for mankind.

I am but the king in incognito of a small republic in difficulties, but the ease wherewith I have succeeded in becoming master of it, and the obvious interest all concerned have in preserving the secret, lead me to conclude that there are other countries, far greater and more important than my republic, that live in unconscious subjection to mysterious foreign sovereigns. As infinitely more money is needed for the purchase of such countries, instead of a single master, as in my case, there is probably a trust, a business syndicate, a limited company of capitalists or of banks.

I have a well-founded suspicion, however, that there are still other countries which are actually governed by small groups of invisible kings, known only to the few who are in their confidence and who act their parts as legitimate heads in a most natural manner.



## THE INNOCENT ASSASSIN

*New Parthenon, October 16*

NEVER a day passes that does not bring me letters from people asking for assistance—a loan, a subsidy, or a grant of some sort. I scan these epistles out of pure curiosity and then consign them to the flames. But I am keeping one that came today, because it is so unusual.

“DEAR SIR:

“Do not refuse to read my story. Only after acquainting yourself with it will you be able to judge whether or no I am deserving of your assistance.

“My father kept a shop where firearms were sold. As a lad I was always with him, and I soon learned that many of those who bought Brownings of us used them to kill either themselves, their wives, or their enemies.

“I conceived so great a horror for my father's trade that I determined to study medicine. I would thus be counterbalancing the evil of which he was the indirect cause. My father sells death, I told myself, and I will sell life and fight death. As soon as I had taken my degree I started practicing in Minneapolis. My clients were few at first but I was pleased with myself nevertheless. None of my patients died, although I must confess their illnesses were but slight. Little by little, however, my reputation for conscientiousness brought me a large and choice practice. It was then that misfortune began to beset me. One, two, three, and even

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four deaths occurred in a year! After each death a careful examination of my diagnosis and of the treatment prescribed convinced me that in at least half of the cases I myself was responsible for the demise. Either I had been mistaken from the outset, or I had not judged rightly certain symptoms, or I had not taken the patient's constitution and peculiarities into account. My colleagues only laughed at me when I confessed my despair, but I could not laugh with them. I had devoted myself to medicine not to assist death but to fight it, and as the deaths continued to occur, becoming indeed ever more frequent, I made up my mind to give up my profession and leave the city.

“Having studied medicine, it was an easy matter for me to obtain a diploma as a pharmacist and I took over a flourishing chemist's shop in Oklahoma. Thus, thought I, I shall indeed be coöperating in the fight against suffering and death, but without direct responsibility. But before the end of the first year I discovered I had fallen into another trap. By mistake a child swallowed a lozenge of caustic potash that I had sold; a lady committed suicide with veronal she had bought at my shop; and a wife poisoned her husband with a preparation of arsenic she had obtained from me by means of a false prescription. I was forced to admit that even chemists are exposed to the danger of becoming accomplices to murder.

“I reflected at length before choosing a new calling and became convinced at last that soldiering was the most innocent of professions. This may strike you as paradoxical, but as a matter of fact it was the fruit of profound consideration. At that time our country was



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not at war and there seemed no probability that our peace would be disturbed. Hardly had I enlisted, however, when the World War broke out, and in 1917 I was among the first to be sent to France. I could not possibly withdraw; I was now a soldier by profession and a loyal citizen into the bargain. Warfare in the trenches depressed me greatly, but I was consoled by the thought that here homicide was collective and that those who were killed were the enemies of America and of humanity. But on a certain day in 1918 I was told off to form part of a shooting party. A deserter was to be executed. When I found myself facing that human rag bound to a chair, my heart gave a great leap. But I could not shirk this duty nor even fire into the air, for an officer was watching our rifles. And again I became the accomplice to a murder.

"As soon as the war was over I left the army. My father had died. I immediately sold out the firearms business, but what I realized was not sufficient to enable me to live without employment. Hoping to increase my fortune and become independent, I began to speculate, and owing to my ignorance of business, in six months I had lost every cent I possessed. I again set about looking for a new occupation and eventually hunger forced me to take a position as a chauffeur. As a doctor I had once owned a car and had been a fairly skillful driver. For some time all went well but eventually my terrible destiny overtook me. One evening, in a street that was poorly lighted, I ran into and killed a poor old woman, and a month later, my master having ordered me to drive fast, I crushed a young man who was crossing a square on his bicycle.

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"I was put into prison and on coming out I gave notice, although my employer would gladly have taken me back. Again I was without food or work. In despair I sought a post as aviator at an aviation camp. I told myself that collisions in the air would be practically out of the question and that the risk would be more mine than the others'. Soon I became a very skillful pilot, but twenty months ago, while making a trial flight with two passengers, a false maneuver due to a momentary distraction on my part caused the plane to crash from a height of six hundred meters. My own wounds healed in a few weeks, but the two unfortunates who were with me were both killed, and through my fault alone.

"I have served my sentence and once more I am penitents, but I have vowed never again to cultivate an art or follow a profession or a trade. I will be neither a murderer nor the accomplice of murderers. The only hope I have of avoiding all danger is to remain idle. It is for this reason that I am writing to you. Most humbly do I entreat you to grant me a small pension, so that I may repent me in peace of my involuntary crimes and not be constrained to commit fresh ones. It would cost you but a small sacrifice and would be a great boon to me. I do not expect to live in luxury. I shall be satisfied if I neither starve nor kill. With a few dollars a month you can save a man from remorse, from imprisonment, and from eternal damnation. I am sure you will listen to my appeal. My peace, my very life are in your hands.

"Believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"GEORGE WILLIAM SMITH."



## RETALIATION

*New York, June 27*

I HAVE sacrificed a truly huge sum and reduced my fixed income by several millions, but one of the earliest dreams of my youth has been realized. The city has been smitten and nature is avenged.

For many years I lived in horrid rooms in the most crowded quarters of the world's most populous, dusty, and noisy cities. I detested the rooms, houses, streets, and cities, but I was obliged to live where I did. I used to fancy that fifty or a hundred years ago, instead of these foul thoroughfares, these filthy and evil-smelling tenements, these labyrinths of asphalt and of mud, there had been meadows where flowers grew in the sun, fields where fruit ripened, birds sang, hares scampered, and the wind blew at will—the free earth, saturated with water, smelling of the grass, wholesome, silent, hospitable to the wayfarer. And I used to dream of a man, very powerful and rich or perhaps a great dictator, who would one day take pleasure in restoring to nature a part, at least, of these disgusting cities, by pulling down houses, tearing up pavements, and bringing back pure air where once had been stench, flower-starred banks where once had been drains, silence where once had been noise, solitude where thousands of beings had been crowded together in superimposed tombs of brick.

I was perhaps unconsciously influenced by this thought when I purchased a large number of houses in

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the poorest quarter of New York. Instead of investing my money in different parts of the city, I instructed my agents to buy in that one quarter only. In time I intended to transform it and make it yield me three times as much. But when I realized that I owned two or three whole streets and with the exception of a few isolated buildings practically the entire quarter, the memory, or rather I should say the temptation, of my dream again took a strange hold on me.

All objections gave way before this fancy. I could not resist it. Little by little I obtained possession of all the houses that were not mine already and finally found myself absolute master of twenty acres of New York. It took six months to get rid of the inhabitants and ten to pull down the houses. Amidst the ruins there still existed several public thoroughfares and it cost me a year of formalities and petitioning before the city and the State authorities finally made them over to me to do with as I pleased. As there were no more inhabitants, these streets, which had once given access to the houses I had destroyed, had become useless. But in order to overcome the final obstacles I was obliged to give out that I was going to make the place a public park. As soon as everything was settled I began putting my plans into execution.

The twenty acres were surrounded with a high wall without windows, gates, or doors—my private entrance being below ground—and after three years of work, a whole brigade of botanists, zoölogists, and engineers have wrought the miracle.

In the place of the filthy quarter once inhabited by workmen, small shopkeepers, and poor clerks, there is



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now a sort of virgin forest with lakes and groves, meadows and watercourses, where birds sing and trees blossom, where the noise of the infernal city arrives only from afar and as a faint murmur. A part of the land has been made into a zoölogical garden, and lions and panthers now roam where children once squabbled and housewives gossiped. Woody parts I have had peopled with hares, squirrels, and hedgehogs. The trees and shrubs, which were full grown when brought hither and have since been most carefully handled, are now so vigorous and so numerous as to shade the paths and form picturesque thickets that give one the sensation of being miles away from the most densely populated city in the world.

There are no buildings except a few carefully concealed pavilions for the use of the gardeners and the keepers of wild animals. People passing outside the walls hear and enjoy nothing of all this except at night, when those in a neighboring street may perhaps hear the roaring of a tiger or the song of a nightingale.

I alone enjoy this small earthly Paradise I have redeemed. I allow no one to enter nor do I invite any one to come hither. I have not spent a great part of my fortune for the sake of praise or compliments, but solely for the satisfaction of the child who long years ago bore my name, to whom the fetid, crowded, and swarming cities caused much suffering, and who has been avenged at last by this restitution to the light of day of a part at least of those fields which man had hidden beneath his wretched cellular cubes.

The streets once trodden by all I now tread alone; where cars once roared and stank, the placid bear now

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stalks; where once there was a bar, there is now a spring of clear water; where the pawnshop once lay in wait for victims, the jackal now basks in the sun.

In the very heart of a proud and colossal city I have bought for myself modern man's greatest and most costly luxury—isolation and silence. Those who pass by outside and view the towering, naked walls, knowing naught of what they enclose, may perhaps exclaim, "A madman's folly!" I myself, however, enjoy the sensation of having created for my own delight a small but cheerful cell of sanity within the enclosure of a vast bedlam.



### AN INTERVIEW WITH EDISON

*New Jersey, June 23*

I HAVE been out to Menlo Park for a little chat with the aged Edison. One of his secretaries had telephoned me that he would not be able to give me more than ten minutes.

I found the venerable magician seated at a very long deal table that filled half the room and was entirely bare; no scrap of paper, no pencil, not even a fountain pen, was to be seen. The aged inventor must have taken an immediate fancy to me, for without any preamble he imparted a piece of unexpected information that I should have set down as most improbable if I had heard it from any one else.



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"One sees at a glance that you are a stranger to the subject," he began, "but I suppose you are aware that it is I who have thought out several of those toys worked by electricity which men—eternal children that they are—pompously call 'great inventions.' I am not ashamed of this. One must spend one's time somehow, and exercise that little trick of the brain which becomes troublesome if left inactive. After all, some of these toys are really useful in the ordinary routine of common life, of material, everyday existence. But you must see that to fix noises on a disk, to amplify the sound of voices, to perfect the electric light or the radio, does not mean to improve human existence, to increase the sum of happiness, or to draw any nearer to the secrets of the universe. Now that I am old I realize that I have devoted my whole life to things of negligible importance. That man is able to see better when dancing or making love, to hear repeated as many times as he desires the latest Broadway song or the last speech of the Republican candidate, in no way alters the fact of our fundamental impotence, our original limitations. When I hear the man of today growing enthusiastic over the speed of his different apparatuses, I cannot help laughing. Airplanes with their 186 miles an hour are but absurd snails in comparison with light, which travels 186,300 miles every second.

"When I was young I fancied, stupidly enough, that civilization consisted entirely of machines. I have constructed a few successful pieces of machinery myself, yet we are precisely where we were before. More than half a century of calculating, of research, of vigils, of experiments, for the sake of putting a few useful or

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noisy baubles on the market! You must grant me that the man in the street is a most extraordinarily indulgent and optimistic animal!

"If I could have invented at least the two most important of all machines, those that could deliver us from what causes us the greatest of all suffering! Man's martyrdom is twofold—for the male the heaviest burden is to have to think; for woman the most appalling torture is childbearing. But we have not yet invented, and perhaps we never shall invent, either the thinking or the generating machine. We have built reckoning machines and robots, but we are still very far from realizing our ideal, for these machines all need the intervention of man. Raymond Lully and Leibnitz had dreams of real and practical thinking-machines, but no one has succeeded in constructing and using them. As for the creation of living beings, we have not got beyond Mälzel's mechanical automaton, somewhat improved. The androids industry is still in its infancy.

"A French decadent, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, amused himself with describing in one of his novels how I had given life to an artificial woman so perfect as to be mistaken for real. But unfortunately that is not true. That Frenchman was seeking either to flatter or to mystify.

"On the other hand, the fact remains that until we shall have discovered machines to act as substitutes for the male brain and the female uterus both the science of mechanics and that of electrotechnics must confess to failure. We cannot cry victory until we have delivered man from the torment of reflection and woman from the burden of maternity. That day is still far distant, however, and I can no longer hope to see it. I have re-



#### THE FORTRESS BY THE SEA

cently completed my eightieth year and the blood no longer flows through my brain as rich and free as it once did. What I have accomplished lies behind me, and it is little enough. I have bestowed bone buttons on people who needed gold dollars. You see before you an aged and disillusioned technician, not to say a failure. Tell no one that Edison himself has acknowledged the bankruptcy of science. The ignorant must have their illusions, the mechanic must have work, and the business man must make money. It is our duty to preserve certain pitiful superstitions as long as possible."

At this point Edison, looking pale and dejected, took out his watch, and with a majestic wave of his hand gave me to understand that the time allotted to me was past.



#### THE FORTRESS BY THE SEA

*New Parthenon, October 6*

FOR the last few years the state of the world has been growing more and more alarming and dangerous, and I have thought best to prepare an impregnable refuge for myself. Wars, invasions, and rebellions are sure to continue for some time yet, and no one is safe. Let all who realize this, and who do not wish to be starved or butchered, take early precautions.

On the northern coast of Brazil and not far from the mouth of the Parnahyba I discovered a small penin-

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sula that exactly suited my purpose, and the work of fortifying it and making it habitable is already well advanced. It is connected with the mainland by a sort of isthmus, where I have laid three rows of mines; thus in case of danger in less than three minutes my peninsula could become an island.

On the highest point I have built a castle faced externally with stone and lined with steel plates, those of roof and terraces being especially thick. At a certain distance, hidden among the trees, are two buildings for the servants. The castle has a deeply excavated underground apartment divided into several chambers, where one could live quite comfortably in case of emergency. There are also spacious cellars for storing provisions and ammunition.

I have installed several plants to render me absolutely independent of the rest of mankind—water cisterns, electric and refrigerating plants, a wireless station, and a vast bin that is already full of coal. The castle is equipped with a library of nearly twenty thousand volumes, comprising the masterpieces of all literatures, the best encyclopaedias, and manuals of every branch of science. There are also three orthophonic gramophones with thousands of disks, and a gallery containing reproductions in color of the masterpieces of all times and countries. On the highest terrace I have placed a telescope with a twenty-six-inch lens, which will be useful when I am suffering from insomnia. The terrace is also equipped with several anti-aircraft guns in case an inquisitive airplane should seek to pry into my affairs. Fortunately my peninsula has a natural harbor, where I shall always keep two motorboats, a



#### THE FORTRESS BY THE SEA

yacht, and two whaling-boats when I am at the castle. I really believe I have not overlooked anything.

As soon as any undesirable changes or alarming demonstrations take place in the country where I happen to be living, I can rush off at once to my fortified hermitage, where I shall find everything necessary for comfort, and there await the end of the crisis in perfect safety. The place is well chosen, for I am near the Gulf of Mexico and in my yacht can cross to New Orleans in a few days. Fortunately there are no towns in my neighborhood, but the hinterland is fertile and could supply many articles that might become necessary during a long period of isolation. I should take some thirty persons with me, among them a doctor, a librarian, an engineer, three capable mechanics, and two colored athletes. I have already purchased a hundred rifles and six machine guns, and I have ordered twenty battery guns. Thanks to the conformation of the peninsula, it would be quite easy to defend it against an attack from the sea.

A ship laden with all sorts of tinned and preserved foods is already on its way there from Brazil, and I intend to build a stable to hold about a hundred head of cattle. Thus equipped I should be able to hold out for at least a year without receiving any supplies from outside. Thanks to the precautions I have taken, I need not fear solitude. Time passes quickly when one has books, music, and astronomy.

I am surprised that the great lords of the earth, men as rich or even richer than I, have never thought of preparing similar places of refuge against the misfortunes and upheavals of war and revolution. Man's

#### THE FORTRESS BY THE SEA

shortsightedness is appalling and passes belief. No one foresees, no one provides against, disasters that—if we consider the madness that has invaded mankind—must be regarded as not only possible but actually imminent. The example of Russia has failed to open the eyes even of those great plutocrats who are most in danger of being shot or despoiled. I alone perhaps, in the whole world, have thought of preparing a *buen retiro* for stormy times—a *buen retiro* partaking of the nature of the feudal castle, the fortified convent, and the pirates' cave, but which will prove far more useful than those sumptuous villas the wealthy have erected in the open country within reach of every one, as if for the very purpose of arousing the envy of the poor and, by providing the opportunity, of awakening that instinct to plunder which is common to us all.

My peninsular refuge will also serve me in times of peace. Every now and then I am seized with the longing to get away not only from the city but even from thickly populated country places. At such times I shall be able to become an anchorite, a hermit, surrounded by all the comforts of civilization. And to my way of thinking there can be nothing more delightful than to be able to isolate oneself from one's own odious kind, to feel in every way independent of them, in a well-defended retreat where they can neither molest nor offend.



## INSURING AGAINST FEAR

*New Parthenon, August 8*

I FELL out of my sequoia where, on one of these hot days, I was sitting on a branch reading, and broke my leg. As soon as the surgeon had done his work and I found myself in bed, a prisoner and unable to move, I took my usual precautions. Without loss of time I sent out in search of a couple of lame individuals to keep me company. I was willing to pay them as much as the governor of a State receives, and their task would be to walk about, or rather hop about, before me. On the following day the two cripples appeared. One has lost both his legs and gets about on crutches, the other has both legs, but they are so twisted and shriveled that he can hardly walk and his movements are extremely grotesque.

During these hours of boredom and vexation these two unfortunates are a great comfort to me. By their awkward movements this legless man and his fellow cripple make me realize what I might have become, and by the law of contrast I am cheered.

This is a most excellent method. I discovered it years ago when I found I was growing nearsighted and for some time was troubled with black specks dancing before my eyes. I at once got hold of some blind men to whom I gave a home, and I was thus enabled to gloat at will over their dead pupils, their empty sockets, and their state of speechless stupor, half idiotic, half ecstatic. It was a great comfort to have them near me;

## INSURING AGAINST FEAR

they made me appreciate more keenly what little sight was left me, and thus enhanced my enjoyment of the sun's light and of the color and shape of things.

I am often asked why I keep a collection of centenarians in a castle in my park—the castle I brought over from Suffolk in sections. My reason for doing so is by no means a philanthropic one, but the same that moved me to summon the lame and the blind. Soon after my fortieth year, when I began to dread the approach of old age, I started looking about for men who had defied death for more than a century. Up to the present I have collected seven, the youngest being one hundred and three and the oldest one hundred and twenty-two. I accept only authentic centenarians in good condition and of the male sex.

From time to time, when I am in low spirits and feeling melancholy, I go and spend an hour with them. Those expressionless, puckered faces, the color and texture of parchment and tattooed over with wrinkles, those jelly-like and vacant eyes, those driveling mouths, those frail and trembling hands, affect me in two ways, either of which I find consoling. Sometimes I tell myself that if these men have succeeded in avoiding the daily traps set by death and in reaching such an age, we may conclude that it is not impossible for man to outlive the usual limit, and that consequently there is hope for me also. At other times, when their lamentable state of decay merely fills me with loathing, I reflect that rather than be reduced to such a condition—half pitiful and half grotesque—rather than become a slave to my fellow men, to know no greater pleasure than the lapping up of a basin of soup, it would be better to



## MAKING OVER THE WORLD

die, say at seventy, the age established by Aristotle—or even earlier.

In any case my centenarians are useful to me and I do not grudge what I spend on them. Like the cripples and the blind men they are a living and tangible insurance against fear, and I am convinced that many public charities, many hospitals, infirmaries, and homes, have been founded for the same purpose of insurance.



## MAKING OVER THE WORLD

*New Parthenon, November 20*

I ALWAYS feel inclined to be angry when I hear talk of man's domination over Nature. Picture to yourself a child left to its own devices in a park, who, in the course of three or four hours, succeeds in catching a few ants and lizards, in treading out a new path in the grass, in making an artificial waterfall in the brook, and in gathering the ripest fruits from the trees; this, if due allowance be made for proportion, is a fair illustration of our power on earth. It seems to me we are still almost at the beginning.

We have learned how to use the winds of heaven and the water of the rivers, but we have not succeeded in mastering the strength of the tide nor in utilizing the volcano's fire. When we shall have succeeded in trans-

## MAKING OVER THE WORLD

forming earthquakes into motive power, then, but not before, may we begin to be proud of ourselves.

Meanwhile our attitude of passive acceptance towards Nature is both shameful and absurd. We nearly always let earth and sky have their own way. Our vaunted science and our loudly extolled techniques have so far failed to conquer the seasons and bend them to our will. We cannot mitigate winter's cold nor lessen summer's heat. We accept thunderstorms when they come, and are incapable of deflecting hail; we suffer the snow patiently and are helpless in the presence of drought.

Why, for example, can we not produce artificial hailstorms and cyclones, rain at will and earthquakes at order? And how is it that we are not capable of making a great artificial sun for foggy countries, a sun strong enough to warm and illumine a whole province? If I had the time I should like to create a vast tropical garden in Greenland, where plants of equatorial regions would flourish in furnace-heated conservatories. And I should also like to build myself a villa in the heart of the Sahara, with three or four refrigerating plants so that every room would have the same temperature as Lapland.

It should be an easy matter, I think, to escape from the tyrannical monotony of day and night; by night, enormous reflectors might be set up on the mountain tops to illumine the whole earth after sunset, and by day, gigantic outpourings of thick smoke would prevent the sun's rays from reaching us.

The worst of it is that, like the peasants of all times, we stupidly adapt ourselves to the earth's maddening



#### MAKING OVER THE WORLD

slowness. Today, in this era of the triumph of speed, even the most progressive farmers wait patiently for months and months for their corn, grain, and fruits to ripen, nor do they know of any way or make any attempt to shorten the time Nature takes for agricultural production. In the matter of transportation it is as if we were still satisfied with our own feet! And then they dare to say we have mastered Nature! Masters indeed!—who must await the pleasure of their slave to be fed by her!

Domination, moreover, implies the possibility of modeling and transforming, and we have left the earth practically as we found it, with all its irregularities, its want of symmetry, its obstacles, and its defects of construction. With the exception of deforestation, of the cutting of a couple of isthmuses and the piercing of railway tunnels, we have but very slightly altered the structure of the tiny planet to which our existence is circumscribed. The glory and special mark of man's genius is his geometrical sense, yet we have not begun to reduce the earth's scandalous vagaries *more geometrico*. Were we indeed the despotic rulers of Nature we fancy ourselves to be, we should long since have transformed the lakes into square basins or shaped them into crosses or stars; we should have reduced the rivers to straight canals and the mountains (those scandalous challengers of our supremacy) to cubes, pyramids, cones, or parallelopipedons with regular contours. Or perhaps we should even have gone the length of removing every gibbosity from the earth's surface.

I am not talking at random or as fancy dictates. There is, for example, too much ocean on this planet;

#### MAKING OVER THE WORLD

three fifths of the earth's surface is covered with water, and the population goes on increasing. Mankind already numbers two billion, and each one of these beings has an intestine some twelve feet long. It follows that every day some five million miles of intestines must be filled, yet many countries produce but little, and as for mountains, for the most part they are entirely unproductive. Therefore, if man be indeed the earth's all-powerful sovereign, he should suppress the mountains and use the million millions of tons of material derived from them to construct artificial islands in the sea. Two excellent results would thus be obtained for the better maintenance of the human race; in the first place, all the continents would be transformed into convenient and fruitful plains, and secondly, the new islands would afford a further vast expanse of dry land for cultivation.

Obviously this would be a gigantic undertaking, but one which should not seem impossible to present-day engineering, which is forever prating of the prodigious strides made in mechanics, and acts as if it were capable of making the world over with its all-conquering machines. In a certain sense the earth is man's farm, and where is the owner of a farm who does not seek to improve and enlarge it? Either we dominate or we do not; and if we do propose to be the autocrats of this lump of fire gone cold, shall we content ourselves with merely scratching its outer shell, with digging a hole or making a furrow here and there?

Aesthetes will say that the world in the form I suggest would be horribly monotonous. But aesthetics will not help to multiply loaves, and when the earth is called



## MAKING OVER THE WORLD

upon to support four or five million millions of inhabitants my suggestion will certainly have to be adopted—unless we revert to cannibalism.

After all, we have to put up even now with far worse forms of monotony. Take, for example, the poverty of the human color-scale. Our skin is always one of three colors—white, black, or yellow. Nor are these even the most pleasing shades, for they are too reminiscent of wax, soot, and jaundice. Once, in order to remedy this insufficiency, I had one of my footmen dyed a nice shade of verdigris, another pure vermilion, and a maid all cobalt-blue. But people who came to the house thought I was crazy and all the servants threatened to leave.

Some time ago, by placing lumps of lime at its source and spreading coal dust upon its banks, I obtained a rivulet of milk flowing between jet-black banks. But every one made fun of me. On another occasion, always as a protest against monotony, I had several hundred-weight of cinnabar thrown into a stream that flows through my grounds, thus obtaining bright-red water. But this time every one shouted that it was a shame.

We may conclude, therefore, that man is indifferent to monotony and that he is not yet tired of seeing all the leaves green and every piece of gold eternally yellow. Consequently he will easily resign himself to the razing of the mountains, which act, moreover, will bear open witness to the triumph of one of modernity's pet ideals—that of universal leveling.

## THE AVENUE OF THE GODS

*New Parthenon, October 26*

THE existence of the gods may be denied, but not that of religions. That there are so many of them and the fact that they have survived for so many centuries prove that they answer a deep-seated need of the human soul. Even in the most enlightened and highly civilized countries the majority of the population belong to some church; it is therefore incumbent on me to choose one.

The choice, however, is extremely difficult. For the most part I live in Christian countries and consequently mine should be the Christian religion, but I must confess that, from what little I know of it, Christianity frightens me. I am ready to acknowledge that it is the most perfect, most sublime of religions, but unfortunately it opposes and condemns all of my most deeply rooted instincts. I detest mankind, for instance, and Christianity commands me to love my neighbor; I find it difficult to tolerate even my best friends, and Christianity orders me to embrace my enemy; I am one of the world's richest men, and Christianity teaches man to despise and renounce riches; I am inclined to delight in cruelty, and Christianity would have me mild and gentle and invites me to mourn over the martyrdom of One who was made to suffer death. To my great regret, therefore, I must forego becoming a Christian. At best I should be but a rebellious, hypocritical follower of that creed. The religion of Christ is too lofty for a man of my sort.



#### THE AVENUE OF THE GODS

Fortunately there are plenty of other religions that will perhaps be better suited to my nature. But without any practical knowledge of it, it is not easy to choose one. For this reason I decided, some time ago, to resort to experimental methods.

In a clearing in a remote corner of my immense park, I have created for my own personal use an Avenue of the Gods, consisting of two rows of temples of the world's leading religions, where authentic priests officiate, whom I have brought from their native countries.

First comes the Hindu temple, divided into three parts—vestibule, sanctuary, and cella—according to the most approved rules. The divinities I have chosen, the goddess Kali and Siva the Destroyer, are served by a real Brahman assisted by a purohita or chaplain, and by a band of sacred dancers—bayaderes. The five daily ceremonies (*sandhya*) are regularly performed and from time to time the festivals of the goddess Kali are celebrated, a goat being then butchered in her honor.

Just beyond stands the Buddhist temple, arranged to suit the Chinese rites. It consists of a great chamber whose entrance is guarded by a couple of monsters. At the far end is a statue of Maitreya, a future incarnation of Buddha, between two of his favorite disciples, Ananda and Kasyapa. Two monks from Ce-Kiang, clad in yellow, perform the ceremonies, which are of the simplest.

Opposite this stands the temple of Zeus, of marble in the Doric style. Although the pagan religion is dead, nevertheless I had the good fortune to discover in the south of France a tardy disciple of that Gabriel Auclerc who, calling himself Quintus Nantius, sought to revive

#### THE AVENUE OF THE GODS

ancient paganism at the time of the French Revolution. His disciple is an aged man with a flowing beard, tall, studious, and an admirer of Julian the Apostate. To the best of his ability he has reconstructed the traditions of the flamines. He frequently asks me to give him a cow or a bull for the sacrifice, and he is willing to put up with the services of one of my cowboys instead of a real victimarius.

Next door is the Shinto temple (*miya*), square according to the Japanese tradition, and built of sacred woods. Inside are the usual sacred mirror, the symbol of the sun, and the famous *shintai*, a round stone into which the *mitama*, the spirit of God, is supposed to enter. Two *Kannushi* are attached to this temple, but unfortunately the lack of followers makes it impossible for them to organize the *shintai* procession.

I would not omit even a Zoroastrian temple. It is the most simple of all; just a stone enclosure where the Parsee priest, whom I got hold of in Bombay, keeps the sacred fire ever burning by feeding it with sandalwood five times a day. When the Parsee has finished his prayers he takes a little of the ash from this fire and touches his forehead with it—that is all.

Opposite this is a tiny Mohammedan mosque, in the most approved Moorish style of the tenth century, with the *mihrab* facing towards Mecca. An imam and a *muezzin* from Morocco recite the prescribed prayers here every day.

Finally, there is a diminutive synagogue, a copy on a small scale of the one in Amsterdam, and here a Rumanian rabbi of the tribe of Levi performs the neces-



### THE AVENUE OF THE GODS

sary ceremonies with the help of a hazzan of Ukrainian origin.

As yet there are only seven temples, but I do not despair of being able to increase their number soon. In fact I have not yet made my choice. When I am staying here I often go to the Avenue of the Gods, assist on the same day at one or more of the functions, and have a chat now with the Buddhist monk, who speaks English, now with the rabbi, or with the Frenchman who is the priest of Jupiter Maximus, or with the Mohammedan imam. In each one of these churchmen there is something that appeals to me, but I always end by discovering teachings and dogmas I cannot accept.

A theosophist has advised me to assemble the images of all the gods, even of those which are no longer worshipped, in one great temple, and to send for a minister of the Unitarian church, or better still a theosophist, to perform the rites of the collective cult. The proposal rather attracts me, partly because it means a great reduction of expense, but for the present I prefer to keep the various religions separate.

A couple of months ago I attempted a far more arduous task, that of assembling here, on my own place, a small Council of Gods in flesh and blood. I had heard that here and there in the world there dwell certain individuals who are venerated as true and real incarnations of the Divine, and I commissioned my friend the theosophist to invite them down here. But matters did not turn out as I had hoped. The Dalai Lama of Lhasa, who is the most celebrated of these living gods, would not even receive my messenger and sent his curt refusal by a simple red lama. And to think that I was

### THE AVENUE OF THE GODS

offering him a huge sum to stay here only one week! The living Buddha of Urga in Mongolia allowed himself to be dragged hither, together with the famous Krishnamurti—a divine incarnation residing for the most part in Adyar—but two were not enough. My agent did succeed in tracing in a Paris suburb the successor of that Guillaume Monod who died in 1896 and who as early as 1836 had proclaimed himself the incarnation of the Holy Ghost. Even this weedy Frenchman, who wished to be addressed as Guillaume III, esteems himself a true divinity. To these three I added a Russian from Saratov, a member of the Bojki sect (little gods), who boldly claims to be an earthly incarnation of God the Father, and a deaf Sicilian whom his disciples regard as the latest manifestation of the Holy Spirit. But the conversation of these five gods failed to edify me. The living Buddha is an old sot who can only repeat, between bouts of drinking, the famous Tibetan formula, *Om mani padme hum!* Krishnamurti did no more than repeat, with hieratic unction and in bad English, certain confused theories from the writings of Madame Blavatsky. The muzhik refused to speak at all until I know not what divine dove should arrive. The Sicilian confined himself to reciting some crazy poems of his own, and as for the Frenchman, he did nothing but scatter the commonplaces of those Protestant sects which are looking forward to the second advent of the Paraclete. After a week of wasted time and boredom I decided to send the five living gods back to their own places.

Thus it is that, while I have spared neither patience nor expense, I have not yet found a religion to suit me,



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## GLORY

and up to the present I have been unable to discover which divinity is best adapted to my case. What if I should end by going back to my mother's religion—that of the Maoris? After all, Atna and Tangaron may be the very gods I am looking for. Who can say?



## GLORY

*Palm Beach, March 20*

FOR the last few days I have been thinking about glory. I should like to become suddenly famous, but I should be still better pleased to have men remember my name for centuries. Is it necessary to be born to greatness in order to live in history? I do not think so. But it certainly is necessary to do something so great and so special that it cannot be forgotten.

This, however, has become difficult to accomplish, for everything has been done already. Men have been to both Poles, the Atlantic has been crossed by air, some one has even been round the world in an open boat and some one else on lame legs. All the enterprises open to ordinary people who are merely rich and persevering have already been carried out. The old-fashioned tricks are not for me. Write a poem? I should not succeed. Govern a country? I do not feel up to that—besides, it would not suffice. Create a nation? But where are the downtrodden peoples, the divided races? Perhaps in

## GLORY

Africa among the negroes, but I cannot get up sufficient enthusiasm for them. Become the leader of a revolution? But where and why? For adventures of that sort one must be a visionary, an optimist, or a poet. I do not love my fellow men and would not know what to say to them to rouse them. A war hero? The war is over and by the time another breaks out I shall be too old or perhaps dead. Besides, in these anonymous wars of annihilation it is not easy to become a hero worthy of a monument, or an inventor of new strategical movements.

Short-lived notoriety is not difficult to achieve by means of some quixotic, stupid, or ingenious performance, but that is not what I want. I want real old-fashioned glory, the glory of a David, a Socrates, a Newton, a Napoleon.

I might imitate certain present-day imbeciles and dance for three days on end, fly for three weeks running, or marry a Chinese centenarian. And the result? There would be a few lines in the newspapers, my picture in the illustrated magazines, and at the end of a week—silence and oblivion.

I am too ignorant to make a great discovery, nor can I paint or compose music. Should I give away my millions to the first comer, instead of being taken for a saint I should be pronounced a fool or a lunatic, and perhaps even get myself shut up. There remains crime, but even this means of acquiring fame is arduous and uncertain. If I should set fire to a New York cathedral I should not become celebrated like Erastratus. Besides, this would be mere vulgar plagiarism and might cost me my liberty.



## GLORY

What is needed is a monstrous and original crime that men would remember as something unique. I have no scruples but neither have I much imagination. Not every one would be able to invent a new form of crime after so many centuries during which mankind has been torturing and murdering. Superior intelligence, ample means, and a total absence of scruples are not sufficient; a man should have a truly magical intuition of the "never-yet-seen," the powerful imagination of the superdemon, and the support of great genius. These are all things which can be neither purchased nor improvised, and instead of fame eternal the result might be the brief publicity of the electric chair.

I might try the opposite course, that of virtue. There are certain saints and philosophers who enjoy great and lasting renown. But I cannot imagine myself among the lepers or doing propaganda work for the conversion of savages. My love for mankind would be but feigned, hypocritical, and consequently ineffectual. My instinct is rather to injure than to help.

However, I cannot reconcile myself to definite eclipse, to fading away into oblivion. I have sometimes thought of buying a discovery or a masterpiece from some impecunious genius and thus obtaining fame by fraud. But a genius who was already famous would not consent to such a bargain, and on the other hand, one must have a sort of genius oneself, at least that of prophecy, to be able to pick out a future genius among the actually obscure. And would not the true artist be tempted presently to denounce the transaction and thus unmask me? Besides, fresh and oft-repeated miracles are ex-

## THE POETRY BUSINESS

pected from one who has achieved greatness, and these I should be unable to produce unaided.

How about raising a marvelous and colossal monument, calculated to withstand the ravages of time and of cataclysms? I fear only the names of the monument itself and of the artists who designed it would become famous; only the very learned would know the name of the individual who had supplied the cash.

I have spent more than half of my years accumulating riches and I now realize that what my first "boss" in California, John Higgins, used to tell me is false. He used to declare that everything in the world can be had for a certain number of dollars. With all my millions I can neither amuse myself nor can I achieve celebrity! I am beginning to think that after all my life has been nothing but an unsuccessful business transaction.



## THE POETRY BUSINESS

*New Parthenon, May 27*

LONG ago I resigned all my directorships and withdrew from all participation in industrial schemes, so that I might purchase that dearest (in both the economic and the moral sense) thing in the world—freedom. It is a luxury that today is beyond the reach of the simple millionaire. I suppose I am one of the five or six approximately free individuals at present living.



### THE POETRY BUSINESS

When a man has abandoned himself for so many years to the vice of business, however, it is almost impossible never to suffer a relapse. Last year I was seized with the desire to found a small business, just to protect me against the temptation of slipping back into big and strenuous undertakings. I wished to create something absolutely new and that would not call for too much outlay.

My thoughts turned to poetry. This species of mental opiate, taken in small doses of a given number of lines, is not an article of prime necessity, it is true, but it is a fact nevertheless that certain people cannot get on without it. Up to the present, however, no one has thought of organizing the output of verse rationally. This has always been left to the caprice of personal anarchy. The reason for this neglect probably lies in the circumstance that a poetry business, even of the most flourishing description, would always yield very modest returns, owing both to the difficulty—I would not say the impossibility—of employing machinery, and to the limited demand for the article.

With me, however, it was not a question of money-making, but of curiosity. But little capital would be required and the initial outlay would be practically inappreciable. I knew that for this new industry I should need skilled workers, but I knew also that there were plenty such, especially in Europe. I set out at once to collect them. When I explained my offer to them I observed in many of the candidates a strange repugnance to regular work in the employ of a captain of industry. But it was not necessary to collect many, as this was only an experiment not undertaken for the sake of

### THE POETRY BUSINESS

gain. I succeeded in obtaining five poets, all but one young, and followers of the most up-to-date schools.

I installed my small staff in my villa in Florida with a couple of colored servants and two female typists, and having had a small printing-press set up, I patiently awaited the first fruits of my venture. The five poets were lodged, fed, and attended for nothing; each had a comfortable monthly stipend and the right to a small share of any profits that might accrue. The contract was for a year but could be renewed for as long again.

From the very beginning there were difficulties and annoyances. One of the poets wrote to inform me that he could not get up any inspiration without the help of certain costly drugs for which his salary was insufficient; one of the typists, the younger of the two, resigned because the five poets would not leave her alone; another poet asked for a small orchestra to facilitate the visits of the Muses, but said he would be satisfied with a gramophone and six dozen disks; the third poet complained of the absence of books and wine; the other two, according to what the second typist, who had remained, wrote me, did nothing but quarrel from morning to night, enveloped in clouds of smoke. Of course I left all of these communications unanswered.

At the end of six months I paid my first visit to the Florida establishment, as had been stipulated in the contract, and called upon my poets, one by one, to report themselves.

The first to present himself in the director's room was Hippolyte Cocardasse, a Frenchman, a deserter from the Dada school whom I had picked up, of course, at Montparnasse. Small, dark, bald but with a fierce-



## THE POETRY BUSINESS

looking beard, all shiny from the rims of his spectacles to his well-polished shoes, he looked less like a poet than an official of the Sûreté just arrived from a prefecture in the provinces.

"You have desired my colleagues and myself," he began, "to create a new form in which modern poetry may be placed on the international market. *Je me flatte d'avoir réussi au delà de vos espérances.* You are certainly aware that each language has its own musical rhythm and that certain words which are colorless or muffled in tone may acquire an admirable resonance when transposed into another rhythm. It follows, then, that to use but one language in writing poetry is only to create difficulties for obtaining that musical richness and variety which is the true purpose of the pure lyric. I therefore determined to compile my verses by choosing here and there in the principal languages those words and expressions which best lend themselves to the harmonious realization of the poetic mystery. In our day all people of culture are familiar with five or six European languages and there is consequently no danger of not being understood. Let me add that the League of Nations would gladly lend its patronage to these first examples of polyglot poetry. Dante has already introduced a Latin verse here and there in the *Divine Comedy*, but these are practically lost in the mass of encompassing Italian. Now I mingle words from different languages in the same verse and each verse is composed of a mixture of this sort. *Voilà mon point de départ et voici mes premiers essais. Jugez vous-même.*"

Hereupon, with a smirk and a bow, Cocardasse

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handed me some large-sized sheets. The title of the first poem was:

GESANG OF A PERDUTO AMOUR

I read the first lines.

Beloved carinha, mein Weltschmerz  
Egorge mon âme en estas soledades.  
My tired heart, Raju presvétlyj  
Muore di gioia, tel un démon au ciel.  
Lieber Himmel, castillo de los Dioses,  
Quaris quot durerà this fun désespéré?  
*Λαμπάδα θελς, drévo zizni. . .*

My linguistic limitations forbade me to read further. I could only give the poet Cocardasse a silent stare.

"Do you feel, perhaps, that the quota for the different languages is unjustly assigned?" he asked. "Though I assure you that in the distribution of quota I have been careful to proportion it to the literature of past centuries, to the demographic and political importance . . ."

I saw it was no use arguing with such an imbecile. "Go on with your work," said I, "and at the end of the year we shall see whether we may expect a large sale of polyglot poetry."

When I had dismissed Cocardasse, Otto Muttermann from Stuttgart was introduced. A lofty monument was Otto, standing well over six feet, a man who more than half a century before had come upon the earth certainly not to adorn it, but to enlighten it. He might have been born of an ox and a lioness; his locks, which he wore long, were still as fair, uncombed, and wild, as in the



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mythical days of Thor and of the Sturm und Drang period, and formed his main claim to the title of poet. Besides being a poet he was a metaphysician, a philosopher of history, and something of an Assyriologist—a good creature on the whole, although his crockery-blue eyes did not inspire confidence. I would have trusted him with millions but I would not have liked being alone with him without a revolver in my pocket.

"Although I am of the Germanic race," Muttermann began, "I have nevertheless always been a fervent admirer of the Frenchman Joubert's line of thought. He uses these precise words: *S'il est un homme tourmenté par la maudite ambition de mettre tout un livre dans une page, toute une page dans une phrase et cette phrase dans un mot, c'est moi*. Applying this to myself, I have made of it a categorical imperative. The great failing of my fellow countrymen is prolixity, and no one can be great until he has freed himself from the habits common to his race. Poetry, moreover, should be the most delicate distilling of a single drop of powerful perfume from a great mass of herbs and flowers.

"My whole life has been one long devotion to this program. At the age of twenty I conceived the plan of an epic that should be both lyrical and philosophic and contain not only my own *Weltanschauung* but also touch upon the historical evolution of man in connection with the central myth of Rhea-Cybele. When I was thirty the poem was finished, but it was too long, for it consisted of fifty thousand six hundred verses. It was then I came across Joubert's profound aphorism. I set to work again with hatchet and file, and by the time I

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was five-and-thirty there remained only ten thousand verses, yet all that was essential had been preserved. By the time I was forty I had succeeded in reducing my poem to four thousand verses, and at forty-six the verses numbered only two thousand three hundred. At fifty, when I came here, I had got the work down to seven hundred and twenty, and now, thanks to your generous hospitality, my dream has been realized. My entire epic has been compressed into a single word—magic, quintessential word that comprehends and expresses everything. I now offer you the result of my strenuous endeavor on the road to perfection."

As he said this, he laid a sheet of paper on my table. In the center of the page a single word had been written in an elegant but nondescript hand:

## ENTBINDUNG

That was all. The rest of the page was blank. Otto Muttermann must have perceived my perplexity. "Do you not sense in this one word, pregnant with a whole world, the infinite meanings that epitomize the destiny of man?" said he. "*Binden*, to bind—the myth of Prometheus, the slavery of Spartacus, the power of religion (binding in faith), the abuses of tyranny, redemption and revolution. The prefix, moreover, gives us the other aspect of the cosmic drama. *Entbindung* is both release and deliverance. It is release from bonds, it is the miraculous birth of the God-Martyr, the triumphant pregnancy of mankind freed at last from myths and laws. This comprises both the metaphysical dualism of the God of Plotinus and the universal course of



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history—conquest and revolution, servitude and liberty!”

Muttermann's eyes were beginning to blaze and I deemed it prudent to praise his synthesis in the secret hope that his madness would soon increase sufficiently to make it legally possible for me to transfer him to a lunatic asylum.

The third poet was from Uruguay and came of the Ultraistic school. Carlos Cañamaque was very young, very fair, and very timid. His eyes, as black as boiling tar, came as a twofold surprise amidst all that fairness and pallor.

“I also have striven to produce something different from the general run of poetry,” he began. “In Italy and France pure poetry already has its established technique; there all poetic charm resides exclusively in the harmony of words, independently of meaning. I have attempted the complete emancipation of poetry from meaning, going even further than the purist poets, who always preserve a residuum of emotive and conceptive content, although it may be encompassed by obscurity. In my poem words are brought together solely with regard to their phonetic value and their power of evocation, without any logical sequence that might attenuate or defeat the counterpoint of sound. Pray read this madrigal as an example.”

There was no escape for me from what follows.

Lienza, sombra, suspiro  
Amarillas, misterios, desierto  
Huella, palabra, doliente, Tiro  
Faraon, corazón, labias, huerto.

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My powers of endurance, which had already been severely strained by the other two poets, vacillated alarmingly at this point.

“And do you really suppose, Señor Cañamaque,” I shouted, “that there are beings in the world imbecile enough to pay money for an absurd string of words like this? My orders to you were to compose poetry, not extracts from the dictionary. You thought you could cheat me, but instead you have supplied me with grounds for annulling the contract. This very day your connection with the factory ceases. Away with you!”

Poor Cañamaque lowered his big, liquid-anthracite eyes and murmured sadly: “Thus have discoverers of new worlds ever been treated!” And ignoring me completely, he made a dignified exit.

The fourth poet to appear before me was a Russian, one of the many emigrants who have distributed themselves over Europe and America, happy to pose at the same time as Westerners and as exiles. Count Fedia Liubanoff cannot have been more than five-and-thirty, but the café life of Munich and Paris had aged him before his time. His face was of the usual Mongolian type of most Muscovites and a short pointed beard, a blending of red and gray, contributed to the Mephistophelian air he affected. His hands were always trembling, because, he said, of the terror of a death sentence that had not been carried out—but according to his friends, because of overindulgence in vodka.

“Mr. Gog,” he said, “I will forego lengthy preambles. You are too clever to need introductory explanations. I desire only to remind you of a truth that your intelligence will not have allowed you to overlook. Every



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poem has two authors—the poet and the reader. The poet suggests and vaguely indicates, the reader rounds out by means of his personal sentiments and memories what the poet has merely hinted at. Without this co-operation poetry is unthinkable. A poet using a thousand verses to describe a fight or a sunset would never succeed in making these things clear to a coward or a blind man. Now poets have long been abandoning themselves to redundancy, I might even say that they actually strive to overwhelm and violate the ego of their necessary coöperator. They wish to express too much and leave no room for the reader's part, for that personal integration which constitutes the greatest attraction poetry has to offer. The Japanese—a gifted and aristocratic race—have succeeded in composing poems of eight or nine words only. But even these are too long. I myself have gone a step further. Here is my book."

It was a small volume bound in red leather. I opened it and began to turn the pages. Each page was headed by a title, but for the rest was blank.

"As you see," Liubanoff resumed, "I have sought to reduce the poet's suggestions to a minimum. Each lyric consists of a title only. I give a theme for individual reflection, the *la* of innumerable and ever new creations. My first poem, for instance, is called 'The Siesta of the Forsaken Nightingale.' It contains all the elements of poetic efflorescence. The word 'siesta' gives the season and the hour, the 'nightingale' reminds one of all that is music, all that is love, and 'forsaken' induces one to enlarge upon the undying themes of betrayal and suffering. If you will but meditate for a few moments

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upon this title, little by little the wonderful song that I have sought to suggest will come into being and unfold within you, and thus, thanks to me, every reader may become a creator. It follows that there will be as many creators as readers. At each reading you may create a new poem that will satisfy and delight you far more than any lucubrations composed by another."

I had reached the point where I actually lacked the strength to fly into a rage. I had to acknowledge that the experiment was a complete failure and that the factory was heading towards disaster. I flatly refused to see the fifth poet.

I left the villa that same night and at the end of the year the entire staff, poets included, was dismissed. It is the first time in my life that I have been so shamefully wanting in business sense, and I am beginning to understand why old Plato wished to exclude poets from his Republic. I have lost exactly seventy-two thousand dollars through this experiment.



### AN INTERVIEW WITH WELLS

*London, May 17*

H. G. WELLS took me for a journalist.

"I was born," he began at once, motioning me to an easy-chair, "I was born in 1866 at Bromley in Kent. I served for a time as clerk in a novelty shop and later



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on studied biology. In 1886 I founded the *Science  
Schools Journal*, in which I published my first article  
on Socrates . . ."

I had to explain to him who I was and that I did not  
wish to hear him repeat his biography out of *Who's  
Who*, with which I was already acquainted.

"Well, then, what can I do for you?" he inquired.  
H. G. Wells is a large man and very sure of him-  
self; he looks more like the agent of a country estate  
than a writer. Plump and florid, with a round and  
heavy face, he seems ever on the point of uttering a  
challenge: "Show your hand! Let us get this matter  
settled!"

He has nothing of the poet, nothing of the dreamer  
or the metaphysician. He remains eternally the "vender  
of novelties." Instead of shawls and hats he has been  
selling, for the last thirty years, scientific chimeras, the  
"latest thing" in novels, stories for Sunday readings,  
and paradoxes developing into tales. In order to draw  
him out I was obliged to tell him that I was engaged  
on research work in Europe concerning the future des-  
tiny of mankind. As soon as the word "future" fell  
upon his ear, Wells became animated.

"You are doubtless aware," he said, "that the study  
and forecasting of the future is my special department,  
and that no one in this country has ever succeeded in  
supplanting me in it. In the department of literature  
England has three employees—the national bard Kip-  
ling, the national clown Shaw, and the national prophet  
myself. Since November, 1901, that is, since the pub-  
lication of my *Anticipations*, prophecy has been my  
main occupation. Scientific, mechanical, astronomical,

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biological, political, military, and social prophecies—  
nothing has escaped me. The human intellect can un-  
dertake nothing more lofty. Religion—the pagan  
through its oracles, and the Judean through its prophe-  
ets—is founded on prophecies; the one purpose of sci-  
ence, as Ostwald and Poincaré have demonstrated, is to  
prophecy. My success in placing prophecy on the lit-  
erary market is my greatest glory." At this point the  
flow of Wells' eloquence was interrupted by the ringing  
of the telephone. "How many words?" shouted the  
prophet to his invisible interlocutor. "For what date?  
All right. . . . Six thousand words, for May twenty-  
fifth. Well, good-by!"

"They want a new prophecy for the *Westminster  
Gazette*," said Wells, turning to me again. "Read it;  
it will be just what you need. I can give you the main  
idea already. Before our century is half out we shall  
have a frightful intercontinental war, which will de-  
stroy at least three quarters of the human race. The  
technique of both aerial and chemical warfare, which  
will make further and frightful progress in the course  
of the next few years, will abolish the historic distinc-  
tion between combatants and the civil population. The  
world's greatest cities will be destroyed, lesser towns  
will be laid waste and depopulated, the centers of high-  
est culture will be reduced to ashes and dispersed, and  
industrial regions will be wiped out. When this war—  
or rather the mass suicide of the nations—is brought  
to an end through lack of gases and explosives, there  
will remain on earth only a few millions of terrified,  
starving beings, natives of the poorest and least civ-  
ilized regions. The intellectuals, leaders, and engineers



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will all have perished, and the semibarbarian survivors will be incapable of reconstructing, even approximately, the civilization they had previously known only from the outside. The main incentives having disappeared, the secrets of power and of knowledge will remain ignored or forgotten. The contents of those libraries which had been spared in the general conflagration will serve to warm the survivors crouching amidst the ruins of church or factory.

"Little by little the last tools will decay and men will be unable to make new ones. The newly formed deserts will be strewn with the rusting skeletons of broken machines, and there will be no one left to re-compose or copy them. Before the end of the century bands of survivors, incapable of reviving the achievements of the dead, will sink back into a state of savagery. In the forests that will have sprung up on the uncultivated fields, apprehensive and hostile tribes will roam, in search of their scanty food. In less than fifty years Europe, now so proud of her science, and America, who glories in her wealth, will be inhabited by clans of neo-primitives who will have forgotten the ephemeral flowering of civilization between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus will be ushered in a long and weary cycle of universal history. You will find further particulars and proofs in the last number for May of the *Westminster Gazette*."

This was a hint for me to depart. As the door closed behind me I heard the rapid ticking of a typewriter. Wells was already starting on his seventy-seventh prophecy.

#### PHILOMANIA

Paris, December 20

LAST night, at the Coupole, I was introduced to a certain Rabah Tehom, who told me he had come to Paris to start the anti-philosophical revolution. At our table, where two Rumanians, a Senegalese, a Peruvian, and a Swede were assembled, this little Rabah Tehom, a sort of Oriental gnome clad in orange, explained his mission in bad French. Under the glare of the electric light his complexion appeared to be something between a pale violet and a dirty green. He has but one arm. He says he lost the other in battle, but no one knows in what war. Upon his greasy locks he was wearing a laurel crown made of gilt paper. He was not afraid of any sort of liquor.

"What have you gained by following reason and exercising your intelligence?" croaked Rabah Tehom, waving his one arm in the direction of the chandelier. "Truth has not been attained, and man is more wretched than ever, while philosophy, which according to the impostors of ancient Greece was to be the crown of all knowledge, either writhes in a mass of contradictions or confesses its impotence. The two original delinquents were punished—Socrates with poison and Plato with loss of freedom—but this was not enough. With their pestilential teachings they have poisoned eighty generations and held them in shackles. The monster Socrates avenged himself for his enforced drinking of the Athenian hemlock by poisoning unresisting



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Europeans with his dialectics for twenty-four centuries. The results are obvious. The obstinate and sterile exercising of reason has led to skepticism, nihilism, boredom, and despair. The few truths to which this method has given some slight insight have but led to terror. In modern times the most lucid philosophers have ended by going mad: Rousseau, Comte, and Nietzsche all died insane. It is thanks to this piece of good fortune alone that they have been able to imbue Western thought with more fruitful and bolder ideas.

"Herein lies the secret of redemption. If intelligence leads to doubt or to what is false, it may be assumed that unintelligence, by virtue of the same law, will lead to certainty and light. If too much reasoning, instead of leading to the conquest of truth, leads to madness, it is clear that we must start with madness to rise to a superior rationality that will solve the world's problems.

"Philosophy—the love of wisdom—must give way to philomania—the love of madness. But madness cannot be taught, like logic and the science of method. The human brain must be weaned from the nefarious practices of ancient rationalism. It is not enough to banish the disastrous cult of intelligence; the tumors of intellectualism must also be eradicated—call them, if you like, lucidity, good sense, the inductive and deductive mania, intellect itself. He who would soar to the upper cycle of inner and universal revelation must first of all go mad. No sane man will ever be able to enter the paradise of truth; five and twenty centuries of experimenting against nature prove this beyond discussion.

"By going over the ground backwards and boldly

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taking delirium as a starting-point, we may perhaps succeed in attaining what has remained unattainable to all followers of reason. Philomania, however, cannot be diffused by means of books as was the case with the now bankrupt philosophy. The individuals best adapted to its study must first be deprived of all intelligence; the future creators of philomania must be educated by other methods than the normal. We cannot use the insane in their natural state, for they still retain too many traces of the rationalistic teachings of the old school of thought. I am now in Europe for the purpose of collecting funds wherewith to found the first Institute of Voluntary Dementation, which will produce the pioneers of philomania. The program is already prepared and I guarantee to transform in the course of three years the most reasonable human animal, even though he be heavily burdened with logic, into a wonderful, prophetic, and demiurgic lunatic. In the course of three generations philomania will have taken firm root and will have ushered in a new civilization better adapted to the needs of the human soul and capable of bestowing upon mankind the peace of absolute certainty."

Rabah Tehom straightened his paper crown, which had slipped down nearly to his eyebrows, wiped his brow, drank the whisky one of the Rumanians had ordered for himself, and cast a questioning glance around the circle of silent listeners. Seeing that he looked sadly disappointed, I took out a hundred-franc note and handed it to the apostle of philomania.

"Here is my contribution to the school of Voluntary Dementation," said I. "It is not much, but I feel that



today the need for a school of this sort is far less urgent than you think."

Rabah Tehom shook his head with a resigned air. "Every one is rotten with intelligence!" he murmured. "The healer is come and they offer him alms!"

In spite of his very obvious disappointment, however, he put the note carefully away without even thanking me and got up. Taking the gilt crown from his head, he hid it in his pocket, and after a respectful bow to the party in general departed from the Coupole with all the pride and dignity of a prophet going forth into exile.



## STARS = MEN

*Nice, February 27*

IT WAS tea time at the Villa des Abeilles. Maeterlinck was waiting for me, serene and smiling, like a philosopher who takes all things as they come.

"As an apostle of silence," he said, "I should remain silent. But one can be silent only with those one has known for a long time—with those one loves. I believe we are not quite on that footing, and I am therefore obliged to have recourse to speech, which is the degradation and decadence of silence.

"You will pardon me if I speak to you only of astronomy. Of late I have read nothing but works on astronomy and I cannot detach my thoughts from the sky.

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You are perhaps unaware that our epoch, which is not a particularly happy one as regards art, is the golden era of astronomy. The progress that has been made in the last thirty years is prodigious. Since the days of Copernicus and Galileo there have never been so many and such vastly important discoveries made in so short a time. Men like Jeans, Van Maanen, De Sitter, Russell, Arrhenius, Barnard, Adams, Eddington, and Dubbles have renewed and greatly extended our knowledge of the astral universe. For the science of the stars the twentieth century will be what the fifteenth century was for physics—a true and complete Renaissance. Unfortunately there are two obstacles that circumscribe the development of this flowering. Cultured people of thoughtful habits do not pursue the study of astronomy and at most have a very superficial knowledge of the solar system. On the other hand astronomers, who are often excellent physicists and mathematicians, are not philosophically inclined. Their genius leads them to the discovering of facts and to very accurate explanations of theories, but they are not capable of deducing from these the moral and metaphysical consequences. Do not think me pretentious if I say I should like to be the connecting brain between the science of the stars and that of man.

"Perhaps you are aware that one of the principles of ancient esoteric science declares that the microcosm is a repetition or reflection of the macrocosm—that is, that the form and structure of the universe exists also in man. Positivist scientists have laughed at this formula, which seemed to them only the fruit of some ingenuous extravaganza. But the latest astronomical dis-



coveries and theories have unexpectedly confirmed the ancient hermetic principle. In a word, the life of the stars in the universe is wonderfully like the life of man on earth.

#### STARS = MEN

"Until half a century ago it was believed that the stars were scattered at random here and there in space and that they were, as the Greeks said, incorruptible, that is, always the same in themselves. Contemporary astronomy *a changé tout cela*. We find in space, which may be finite, as Einstein affirms, but which is practically unlimited, nations and peoples of stars. These are the famous island universes of which Herchel had an inkling and which today are universally recognized. These islands are of two sorts—the spiral nebulae, such as our Milky Way—to which the sun belongs—and the globular clusters. The spirals are immense rivers of gaseous mist, the coagulation of hundreds of millions of stars. The globular clusters—as for example that of Hercules—are independent of the spirals, are spherical in shape, and contain millions of stars. The heavenly bodies, then, are not scattered, as was once believed, but are clustered together in vast companies. So in the heavens, as on earth, corporate living is the rule.

"And these societies, like human societies, are composed of families—the solar systems. In that giant nation forming the Milky Way—made up, it would appear, of hundreds of millions of millions of celestial bodies both alive and dead—there are at least one hundred thousand systems similar to our own, that is to say, in which a sun acts as beneficent father to a circle of planets that are actually his children because they are the offspring of his loins, whether we accept the

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earlier theory of Kant and Laplace or that entirely modern one of Jeans. In their turn the satellites are the children of the planets, so that each solar system is the counterpart of a patriarchal family.

"Another admirable analogy between the stars and man is the existence of couples. Most human beings live in pairs—husband and wife, inseparable friends, lovers—and the majority of stars are what astronomers call 'double.' In appearance they are two stars of almost equal size that move together and in harmony around the same center of gravity.

"Stars, like men, live, that is, they are born, have their youth, grow old, and die. Spectroscopy has enabled us to reconstruct the biography of the stars. In the beginning they are gaseous masses, which by degrees become condensed and reach a maximum of brilliance and heat; this is their adolescence, their youth. These are the giant stars, white or bluish in color, the colossal adolescents of the heavens. Little by little they grow smaller, become yellow, then red and ever smaller. Our sun is one of the dwarf yellow stars that show signs of age. Finally they shine no more; the ruby mass grows dim and finally becomes black; the stars are dead, but their dark corpses continue to circulate amidst the splendor of their living sisters.

"There are other singular points of resemblance between the human and the astral world. Among ourselves, as among the stars, the dead are more numerous than the living; young stars that are rich in light and heat are infinitely fewer in number than the old and impoverished; the giants and supergiants are but few



compared to the dwarfs. In the heavens, as among men, the dead, the mediocre, and the poor predominate.

“With regard to the aging of the stars I wish to point out a remarkable affinity with that of man. The Harvard spectroscopic scale, by which we are enabled to tell the age of the heavenly bodies, shows us that old age is revealed by a line that betrays the presence and the increase of lime. Now in man the sign of old age is arteriosclerosis, or the ossification—the hardening—of the arteries, the preponderance of calcic matter.

“The giant stars, white or blue, are spendthrifts. They burn and illumine with incalculable generosity, giving out every second torrents of light and heat. This is the divine madness of youth, which is punished by its own brevity. In fact this period, like its equivalent in the life of man, lasts but a short time, and this is the explanation of the fact that yellow dwarfish stars, smaller, colder, and older, greatly outnumber the others in the population of the heavens.

“Then there are stellar clusters that never succeed in shining at all, or at least never attain a maximum temperature of  $2700^{\circ}$ , which they must have for us to see them. They represent what in the human race are termed ‘abortions.’

“I foresee your objection in connection with age. Before its extinction a star has lived millions of centuries, whereas we barely reach an average age of half a century. But if you will compare the overwhelming bulk of stars with the infinitesimal bulk of man you will find that your objection does not hold. I have made some approximate calculations and have discovered that in proportion to bulk man’s longevity is superior to that

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of suns and planets. Apparently the earth is hardly two hundred million years old and it will probably live as long again, but were it as long-lived as man, who is so much smaller, instead of four hundred million years it would live for many thousands of millions of centuries.

“But you will tell me that there are other differences: the stars are purely physical and material bodies, while men are living and sensitive beings—the comparison between human society and stellar society has its limits. Nothing of the kind! The stars too, like animals and men, are fed. They gulp down innumerable bolides that are wandering through space and absorb the infinity of electrons that are suspended in the ether. If they did not, they would die very soon—they cannot waste away and give out, as suns do, without making up the loss. They are born, as we are: the sun, as I have told you, is a father, and—a strange thing—the birth of the planets could not take place without the intervention of another giant star that, by drawing near, causes the emission of gaseous matter from the body of the father—that phenomenon which we may call “the starry flow.” As an effect of rotation, that flow is detached from the star in love, and splinters into many pieces, which as they grow cold form planets.

“As to sensibility, I will content myself with reminding you of the celebrated experiments of Bose on the psychic life of minerals. There is not a particle of the universe that does not vibrate, that is not attracted or repelled, that does not enjoy and does not suffer. Why should the stars be the exception?

“We may conclude, it seems to me, that in truth the microcosm is the mirror of the macrocosm. Little men

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STARS = MEN

on a little planet correspond perfectly to great stars in infinite space. In the heavens the stars live in couples, in families, and in nations like ourselves, and like us they are born, they sparkle in fleeting youth, they reproduce, they decline, they shrink, and they die. Even up there geniuses, giants, the rich, the living, are the exception. The inhabitants of the universe, which seem so different and so distant, live in the same way as the inhabitants of the earth, pass through the same experiences, possess the same characters. Pascal was afraid in the presence of the celestial spaces—we find up there, thanks to our astronomers, living beings like ourselves, that is, big brothers. Love takes the place of fear, the smallest of terrestrial animals, am of the same species as Sirius and Aldebaran, and if the stars resemble men in all ways, then I may well cherish the illusion that I am a star."

The venerable Maeterlinck suddenly became aware of my amazement (which was not unmixed with envy) and he quickly interrupted his discourse. We went into the garden, where the mimosa's blossoms, like drops of hoarfrost the color of sulphur, were beginning to shrivel.

"Are you not glad to be a star?" asked the author of *Le trésor des humbles*.

"Very glad indeed," I replied, "and I am grateful to you for having revealed to me my celestial relationship."

On my way down to Nice I studied the great star-strewn sky—a thing I am not in the habit of doing—and before closing the door of my hotel behind me I waved an all-embracing salute to my sisters who, I am

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thankful to know, reside at a distance of millions of millions of miles.



## THE CORPSES OF CITIES

Naples, October 12

I AM almost at the end of a journey throughout this old world in search of corpses, with an itinerary of ruins and centuries. Instead of stopping in the cities that are alive and inhabited by living beings, I have been led by my pilgrimage to all the cities that are dead and inhabited by shades. In Egypt, leaving out Cairo and Alexandria, I visited Heliopolis and Thebes; in Asia, starting from Troy, I saw Pergamum, Sardis, Ancyra, and Jericho, and pushing farther into the desert, fabled Tadmor of the thousand columns, Ecbatana, the city of the Magi, and finally Nineveh and Persepolis, those masses of imperial masonry. I then returned to Europe and at Crete wandered among the excavations of the palaces of Knossos. In Greece I contemplated the ruins of Eleusis and of Delphi, and in Albania those of Butrinto. At last I reached Italy. In Sicily I stopped only at Selinute. I had been to Pompeii before but I wished to visit Herculaneum again. I climbed to the top of the Cumaean Acropolis (above the sibyl's cave) and pushed on as far as Paestum, the ancient Posidonia. Further north I still have to visit Ostia, Norba, Vetulonia, and Populonia.



## THE CORPSES OF CITIES

I do not pretend to have seen all the dead cities but I certainly have visited the most famous. These stony skeletons of ancient human lives are infinitely more attractive to me than vulgar modern towns, where the corpses of tomorrow are herded together. The broken column no longer supports the architrave, the sky has resumed possession of the temple's pavement. The sun, once more illumines cave and crypt; the houses are but naked walls; palaces and tombs are alike empty—everywhere are ashes, dust, and silence. The mighty, once owners of mansions and masters of provinces, no longer tread the streets' uneven pavement, but only excavators, archaeologists, and pilgrims—the servants of death. Into the rooms where once were love and laughter, the rain now pours at will; in the amphitheaters the lizards and scorpions now warm themselves in the sun; in the halls of kings there are owls and hoopoes.

In other men, perhaps all this grandeur in ruins, these capitals of pleasure and of pride reduced to grass-grown heaps, may arouse feelings of sadness and regret. With me it is not so. My love of destruction and humiliation finds glorious satisfaction in these labyrinths of ruins. At one moment my pride is stimulated—in the midst of all this passing, *I* am alive—at another, I experience the ecstasy of humiliation—our own cities will become like these and our splendors suffer the same fate. And always, in one way or another, the spirit is freed from what is commonplace. Palmyra impressed me far more deeply than London.

Deserted or excavated cities are incomparably finer than living cities. The imagination reconstructs and

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completes, thus obtaining a more gigantic and perfect whole. To me nothing is marvelous save what is unfinished or nearing complete destruction. And the odor of death is a strong elixir for one who knows he must die.

The sky was tempestuous on the day I was at Paestum, but a ray of sun, reanimating the Temple of Neptune, with its mighty honey-colored columns ravaged by the centuries but still terribly alive, like so many pitiful tree-trunks rising out of the earth—a ray of sun, I say, sufficed to reveal to me for one short moment all the light and life of Greece. That great dead home of a dead god, standing in the midst of waving grasses and the flowering asphodel, between a dark and distant mountain-range and the sea moaning at its base, seemed more truly alive and luminous than Nature herself. Not far away stood a girl, dark, handsome, her hair confined by a red kerchief, and her eyes like those of an angel of the night. And there, beside the temple, it was she who seemed to be dead.



## CACCAVONE

*Naples, October 23*

IN A Swiss café at Pompeii I met a certain Professor Caccavone who calls himself a "metasophist" and declares he has "surpassed" all the most modern philoso-



phies. As far as the visible animal is concerned, Caccavone tends to reproduce the globosity of the sphere. At first sight he seems to be composed of one whole globe and three halves. He has the massive head of a broken-down giant, two rotundities that cannot be concealed and that overflow even the broadest chair, and another in front curving downwards from the chest to where the legs begin.

They tell me he is a most prolific individual; every year he writes a book and begets a child. The books all say more or less the same thing, but the children differ one from another. Caccavone is equally proud of both achievements. There are at present fourteen volumes and fourteen children, and the circumferential metapher has had to practice many trades to satisfy the needs of his large family.

There is no post, situation, appointment, or sinecure within a radius of sixty miles or so that Caccavone has not held, is not now holding, or does not hope to hold. As a member of the town council he performed the duties of school superintendent; he has been general and perpetual secretary of the Plutonic Academy; at the School of Pompeii he was professor of the history of the errors of mankind; at Boscoreale he has taught comparative philology; at Stabia he lectured on pneumatology; at Angri he was actually the director of an institution for the feeble-minded. Besides all this he was president of the League for the Rights of Vegetables, member of an international commission for abolishing common sense (regarded as being obstructive to metaphysics); vice-president of the society for the protection of heresiarchs; board director of three publishing-

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houses; editor of the *Intersecular Encyclopaedia*; temporary commissary at the Center for the Diffusion of Useless Information; treasurer of the National Society for the Pneumatic Voiding of Sewers; chairman of the local council for the Repression of the Puericultural tions; editor of a metasophic journal, of a puericultural magazine, of a weekly publication dealing with metemorphoses, of a bulletin of archaeological research in Atlantis, and of sundry other periodicals. With the help of numerous stipends, of various indemnities, of gratifications at examinations, of special perquisites, commissions on dividends, and other lesser emoluments, he has managed to feed himself and his family, to build a couple of houses, and to keep a current account in several banks.

His physical aspect and his greed of gain notwithstanding, Caccavone's ruling passion is philosophy, or as he himself says, metasophy. The other day I had a long talk with him (he was hoping I would advance the cash for founding a metasophical hermitage of which he himself would be prior, master, and steward) and I believe I have grasped the true significance of his thought.

"A Sicilian philosopher," he told me, "succeeded some years ago in achieving the most complete reduction of ancient and modern metaphysics, and in demonstrating the equation, Being = Thought. But this scientist did not perceive that in his idealistic and absolute monism there remained a fatal residuum of dualism. Insistence upon an equation, even when it is founded upon identity of terms, always implies the existence (at least apparent and phenomenal) of two terms. If Being be declared

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the equivalent of Thought, or capable of perfect reduction to Thought, it must mean that there are two parts of Being which, to the eyes of common reason and reasoning experience, are not Thought. The superhuman effort necessary to unite the two conceptions proves that perfect identity is rather an ideal than a truth of immediate intuition.

"I have gone even farther than the Sicilian super-idealist, and have sought to analyze the two terms he has been at pains to identify. Being, you will admit, is a conception so universal as to have no significance at all. It can be made to embrace all things and consequently contains no one thing in particular. It is a mere graphic sign—nothing more.

"There remains Thought, and this is the hardest nut to crack. Let us see, then, of what this famous Thought consists, which according to my timid predecessor is the only reality. Let us take it apart. First of all we find the so-called sensations and representations. But since Berkeley's clever discovery we know well enough what these are—things themselves, what physiologists call 'matter.' To have the sensation of something red signifies the presence in ourselves or outside of ourselves of that color.

"Then we find will. But Loeb's experiments and the still bolder ones of Pavlov have proved that this is merely a matter of tropisms, or better still, of reflexes. The fact that the male is attracted by the flesh no more proves a conscious choice and voluntary decision than does the turning of the sunflower towards the sun. Jagadis Chandra Bose has shown that similar attractions exist also in plants and minerals, but no idealist

will admit that cabbages and stones are endowed with thought.

"There remain general conceptions, abstractions, ideas. But as we saw in the case of Being, these are but graphic or vocal signs without true content, which we use in talking much as children use acorns or buttons in their games, pretending they are coins. To conclude, then—this much-vaunted Thought, to which all Being is to be reduced, simply does not exist; it is but a figment of the imagination, a pure convention. The heroic cycle of modern philosophy is complete. Descartes opened it when he said, 'I think, therefore I am,' and Caccavone closes it by the dialectic conclusion, 'I do not think, therefore I am not.' The true synonym or rather omonym of Being is Nothing. We do not exist, thought does not exist, therefore nothing exists. This is radical metaphysics or if you prefer a Greek term, oudenism."

"Then where does what the Germans call 'the sense of values' come in?" I inquired. "The sense of good and evil, of truth and falsehood, of beauty and ugliness?"

"I see," he replied, "that you are not overfamiliar even with absolute idealism, which is but the starting-point, my own system being the most extreme point to which modern philosophy has attained.

"My predecessor has already shown that time gradually renders erroneous, bad, and ugly what once seemed good, just, and beautiful. The errors of today are the truths of yesterday; what today is good will be bad tomorrow. Admit this, and the consequence is plain; if everything as it passes through the sieve of time becomes evil, error, or ugliness, this means that in reality there is never true goodness, true truth, or



true beauty. Consequently the sense of values has no meaning. We get back to the profound saying of the Old Man on the Mountains, 'Nothing is true, all things are permitted.'"

"I have another objection to make," I ventured at this point. "If nothing exists and everything can logically be reduced to nothing, how do you explain our existence—yours and my own, for instance?"

Caccavone's great, round face suddenly became a mask of twitching wrinkles surrounded by hair, so convulsed was he with laughter, and his eyes, which but a moment before had been so protuberant as to appear actually to touch his glasses, now vanished completely behind a crumpled veil of heavy lids. As soon as he recovered and was able to speak, he exclaimed:

"Do you mean to tell me that you, like all ignorant beings, actually believe in your own existence? Are you still held in the toils of a superannuated superstition? Do you not see that if you recognize your own existence and consequently that of others and of the universe, you are forced to recognize also the existence of a Supreme Being, of the Eternal Author of all things? And have you yet to learn that God is dead, slain and definitely abolished by us, the philosophers?"

"Oblige me by analyzing the conception of existence. What does 'to exist' mean? To continue and to be conscious. But you must be aware that every minute our persons, both physical and moral, are changing, passing, altering. You are no longer what you were an hour ago; another Gog has been born, the old Gog is dead. And thus it will go on until total destruction, which, if we consider the infinity of time, must be imminent.

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"Are we then truly conscious of ourselves? Never and in no way. As soon as I decide to examine the present state of my consciousness I add something to it by the very act of giving it my attention, something that was not there before—that is, something that deforms it, transforms it into an entirely different state—and what was of the present instantly becomes of the past, that is, dead, intangible, unrecognizable. As for my future states, they are not yet, ergo they do not exist nor can they be considered. The present state, then, escapes and dies as soon as we seek to hold it; the future has not yet appeared and is consequently inapprehensible. The conclusion is that not even for a moment are we ever truly conscious of the content of our pretended and hypothetical thought. It is clear that we have no right to deduce the fact of our existence from phenomena that are hopelessly unknown and unknowable. That which changes indefinitely and with baffling swiftness has neither consistence nor reality—it is a perpetual passing and not substance. Therefore I am justified in repeating my anti-Cartesian axiom: 'I do not think, therefore I am not.' And in the place of the famous but ingenuous conclusion of the Etnean philosopher, I boldly set my own: 'Being = Nothing.'"

At the moment I could think of no answer to this tirade. Caccavone rose in all the majesty of his four spheres, and left the café without paying for the four glasses of beer he had consumed. My initiation into oodenism thus cost me a severe headache and sixteen Italian lire, including the tip.



## THE COMTE DE SAINT-GERMAIN

*On board S.S. Prince of Wales, February 25,  
1947.*

A DAY or two ago I made the acquaintance of the celebrated Comte de Saint-Germain. He is a very dignified gentleman of medium height, who dresses with simple elegance. He does not look more than fifty.

In the early days of our voyage he neither approached nor spoke with any one, but one night when I was alone on deck, watching the lights of Massaua, I suddenly found him standing beside me and bowing. On learning his name, I concluded he must be a descendant of that Comte de Saint-Germain who filled the annals of the eighteenth century with his mysterious doings and with the legend of his longevity. As it happened I had recently read an article in a magazine on the "immortal" nobleman and thus, fortunately, was not entirely unprepared for this meeting. The count was pleased to hear that I knew something of the story and presently decided to confide his great secret to me.

"I never had any children and I have no descendants. You will therefore kindly believe me when I tell you I am the same person who was known in the eighteenth century as the Comte de Saint-Germain. You have seen that some of my biographers make me die in 1784 at the castle of Eckenförde in the Duchy of Schleswig, but there exist documents to prove that I was received by the Empress of Russia in 1786. The Countess of Adhemar met me in Paris in 1789, in the Church of the Recollets. In 1821 I had a long discussion with the

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Comte de Châlons in the Piazza San Marco in Venice. An Englishman, a certain Vandam, recognized me in 1847. In 1896 my connection with Mrs. Annie Besant began. Mrs. Oakley tried in vain to find me in 1900, but as I was acquainted with that good lady's character, I was careful to avoid her. A few years later I met Mr. Leinfelder, who described me somewhat fantastically, but none the less fairly accurately. After some seventy years of absence I had a desire to see old Europe again, but now I am returning to India, where all my best friends are. The Europe of today, bled white by the late war and gone mad over machines, is no place for me."

"If the accounts I have read were correct," I said, "you were over a hundred in 1784, at the time you are supposed to have died."

The count smiled indulgently. "Men are too forgetful and too childish to understand chronology," said he. "To them a centenarian is a prodigy, a miracle. In ancient times and even in medieval days certain elementary truths were still remembered that arrogant scientific ignorance has now caused to be forgotten. One of these truths is that *not all men are mortal*. The majority do certainly die in the course of seventy or a hundred years, but a small number go on living indefinitely. Regarded in this light, mankind is divided into two categories—the great common mass of the 'definitely finished,' and the very limited and aristocratic band of 'those who have vanished.' I belong to this small élite, and in 1784 I had been alive not for one century only, but for several."

"Are you immortal, then?" I asked.



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"I have not said so. One must distinguish between one form of immortality and another. For thousands of years religion has taught that all men are immortal, that is, a second life begins for them after death. A certain number of individuals are given a terrestrial existence so much longer than the usual life of man that to ignorant, short-lived beings it seems immortality. But as we were born at a given moment of time, so in all probability we also sooner or later shall have to die. The only difference is that our average existence is measured not by scores of years but by centuries. After all, if we consider the relativity of time, there is not such a remarkable difference between dying at seventy and dying at seven hundred."

"You have alluded to an aristocracy of immortals. Are you not alone, then, in enjoying this privilege?" I asked.

"If men were more familiar with history they would not marvel at certain statements. In every country in the world, both the most ancient and the most modern, the firm belief exists that certain individuals have not died but have been spirited away—that is, they have disappeared and their bodies have never been found. They have either gone on living in hiding and under new names or else they have fallen asleep and may waken and return at any time. Go to Germany and they will show you the Unterberg near Salzburg, where for centuries Charlemagne has been waiting, apparently asleep; then there is the Kyffhauser, where Barbarossa took refuge and still waits; and the Sudmerberg, which still shelters Henry the Fowler. In India they will tell you that Nana Sahib, who led the mutiny in 1857

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and disappeared in Natal without leaving a trace, still lives in hiding in the Himalayas. The ancient Hebrews knew well enough that the patriarch Enoch was spared death, and the Babylonians believed the same of Hasisadra. For centuries Alexander the Great was expected to reappear in Asia, just as the return of Hamilcar, who disappeared in the battle of Panormus, was looked for by the Carthaginians. Nero reappeared several times after he was supposed to be dead, and according to his ancient biographers, Apollonius Thyaneus vanished without having suffered death. Every one knows that the inhabitants of Britain never believed in King Arthur's death, nor the Goths in that of Theodoric, nor the Danes in that of Holger Danske, nor the Portuguese in that of King Sebastian, nor the Swedes in that of King Charles XII, nor the Serbs in that of Kraljivic Marco. All of these monarchs are asleep and hidden away, but they will return some day. To this very hour the Mongols are looking for the return of Genghis Khan.

"A plausible interpretation of some verses in the Gospels has led millions to believe that St. John did not die, but still lives in our midst. In 1793 the famous Lavater was sure he had found him at Copenhagen. One classic example should indeed suffice, that of the Wandering Jew, who, under the names of Ahasuerus and of Battadeus, has been encountered in different countries and centuries, and is now more than nineteen hundred years old. All these traditions, which are quite independent of each other, prove that mankind is certain or at least harbors the conviction that there are beings whose years greatly outnumber the usual span



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of life. And I, who am one of these, can give definite assurance that such beliefs are true. If all men enjoyed a similar longevity, life on earth would become impossible. It is necessary, however, that from time to time such beings should exist; in a sense we are the permanent notaries of the transitory.

"Shall I be committing an indiscretion if I ask you how you feel as an immortal?" I inquired.

"You must not think that our condition is one to be envied," was his answer. "Quite the contrary. My own legend affirms that I was acquainted with Pontius Pilate and was present at the Crucifixion. This is a stupid lie. I have never boasted of things that are false. I am only a few months over five hundred years old. That means I was born in the early years of the fifteenth century and that I was just in time to become well acquainted with Christopher Columbus. But at present I cannot tell you the story of my life. As you are aware, the only century during which I was in constant communication with mankind was the eighteenth, nor do I regret this. As a rule I lead a solitary life and I am not fond of talking of myself. In the course of these five centuries I have had many gratifying experiences and my curiosity especially has enjoyed ample satisfaction. I have seen the world change its aspect; in the course of a single life I have seen Luther and Napoleon, Louis XIV and Bismarck, Leonardo and Beethoven, Michelangelo and Goethe. Perhaps I owe it to these experiences that I am cured of any illusions concerning great men. Such advantages as these we pay dearly for, however. After a couple of centuries the immortal becomes a victim to incurable ennui. The world is monoto-

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nous, men learn nothing new, and each generation falls into the same errors and horrors; events do not actually repeat themselves but they are all remarkably alike, and we have had plenty of time to learn all there is to know. There is an end to what was novel, surprising, or enlightening. Since there is only the Red Sea to hear me, I may confess to you that I am tired of my immortality. Earth has no more secrets for me and I no longer hope for anything from my fellow men. I may well repeat the words of Hamlet, which I heard for the first time in London in 1594: 'Man delights me not; no, nor woman neither.'"

The count seemed suddenly to become extremely despondent, as if he were growing older with every passing minute. He did not speak again for more than a quarter of an hour, but stood lost in contemplation, now of the dismal ocean, now of the star-set heavens.

"You must pardon me," he said at last, "if my conversation has bored you. When old people begin to chatter they are certainly odious."

All the way to Bombay the count refrained from addressing me again, although I tried repeatedly to start a conversation. As we were leaving the ship, however, he bowed politely to me and I saw him go off with three venerable Hindus who were waiting for him on the pier.



## EVERYTHING IS MINUTE

*New York, January 24*

AS I belong to the same species, man's humble attitude of satisfaction amazes and offends me. He is always prating of greatness—the *biggest thing in the world*—but presently you discover that every slightest thing strikes him as immense. He is entirely wanting in a sense of the gigantic in anything. He talks like Samson and acts like Tom Thumb.

A statue two hundred feet high is colossal in his eyes; a building five hundred feet in height seems to him to challenge the skies; a tower of a thousand feet is a miracle never before witnessed; a bridge three thousand feet long is a triumph of human genius! A city with six or seven million inhabitants—which means that it is a hundred times less populous than many anthills—strikes him as a huge metropolis, and a nation of a hundred million seems a countless host. There is no greater ecstasy than that these paupers experience before the works of mean artificers. The first time I stood at the foot of the Eiffel Tower I could not help laughing. That awkward cage of rusty iron which looks like a toy flung aside by the engineers, there on the banks of a puny stream—could it really be the loftiest construction in the world? It is enough to make one ashamed of being a man and of having been born in this century.

St. Peter's in Rome they say is the largest of the world's churches; at least it has, as a vestibule, a square that might well have been modeled—on a small scale, of

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course—on one of my own dreams. But disappointment awaits him who enters. Is this all of it? A few steps take you to the space beneath the cupola. I will not go so far as to say it is entirely ugly, for all who are versed in architecture admire it, but its dimensions are incredibly small. Should the World Emperor, who one day or another is sure to unite all these petty provinces called kingdoms and republics under his own sway, should such an emperor build a palace worthy of himself, a cupola like this of Michelangelo would hardly be big enough to cover a servants' entrance. And as for the Colosseum, it would be used, I fancy, merely as a small courtyard somewhere in the region of the kitchens.

The Babylonians and Egyptians may perhaps have had a more accurate sense of grandeur than ourselves, although it is not safe to judge by ruins that may be very deceptive. But the moderns, with means and mechanisms at their disposal that are so vastly superior to those the ancients possessed, should do far better and not be satisfied with gaping at the miserable efforts of our micromaniac architects.

No one possesses any imagination worthy of our status as monarchs of our planet. It might be a good plan to start rebuilding the Tower of Babel, on which work was stopped thousands of years ago owing to certain cowardly superstitions. A supertower of say three thousand feet, rising above the region of the clouds and enabling man to overlook an entire kingdom lying at his feet, should not be an impossible undertaking for our builders.

Nearly four centuries have elapsed since Michelangelo conceived a plan that was really worthy of man



—to chisel a mountain in such a way as to transform it into the statue of a giant. But no one would listen to him, no one would help him. Now I maintain that this piece of work, although it was never carried out, is Buonarrotti's true masterpiece. In the Carrara Mountains there is still a mountain that would be admirably adapted to this scheme.

And who has ever thought of building a bridge that shall be truly worthy of human power—a bridge between Europe and America? All the technicians I have consulted have declared this to be feasible. It is merely a question of expense, of time, and of—courage. My contemporaries, however, are disgustingly timid. An imperial highway seven hundred feet broad, a hundred miles long and flanked by thousands of colossal statues of the world's greatest geniuses, running through a single vast metropolis of at least thirty million inhabitants, would strike these all too adaptable pigmies as an absurd dream.

They are satisfied to admire ships seven hundred or a thousand feet long that carry a few thousand living beings across the seas slowly. But a ship to suit our times should be as big as an island, with gardens in which plants flourish in real soil and with streets and palaces—a ship not destined to toil backwards and forwards between one continent and another, but to render possible permanent escape from each and every continent. The ships of today are nothing but big steam-barges, which those living a century hence will regard as we regard the stagecoach of a century ago.

At present only our words are—approximately—such as a titan race might use, while our deeds remain

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those of moles and ants. Even the termites can give us points on grandeur. Modern man, with all his bragging, thinks like Gulliver and never notices that he is living on a level with the Lilliputians.



### THE CHAIR OF PHTHIRIOLOGY

*New Parthenon, April*

SINCE the newspapers announced that, at my own expense, I would endow a chair at the University of W. provided the professor holding it should lecture upon a "subject not included in the curriculum of any other institute of learning," I have received at least fifty letters proposing the most amazing and impossible branches. That I may keep it in mind, I am copying into this diary the letter that has pleased me most.

"DEAR SIR:

"Your generous offer to endow a chair for a branch of learning taught nowhere else may at last confer well-deserved autonomy upon certain studies I have been pursuing for many years with unrequited but zealous devotion, studies that—alas—are generally regarded merely as a branch of entomology or worse still, of parasitology.

"As you have perhaps already divined, I refer to phthiriology or the science of lice, in which I became



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interested during the war through the famous naturalist, W. N. P. Barbellion, of the British Museum. He himself, however, still regarded lice solely in their zoölogical aspect, whereas I, having extended the field of pedicular research, can safely boast of having founded phthiriology as an independent science, this being the first example known to me of what may be termed historical, moral, and aesthetic zoölogy.

"Whereas in the past zoölogists have not gone beyond a description of the animal and its habits, I have studied its significance and its influence in art and on human affairs. In the case of phthiriology I have not confined myself to a careful observation of the forty species divided into six categories that constitute the family of the Pediculidae, but I have also considered or summarized, with the aid of an enormous amount of data collected with much difficulty, the part that the louse has had in the many phases of the history of men.

"You may be inclined to smile when I say that a creature so small and so greatly disliked has a place—and not of the meanest—in universal history. In order to convince you and give you an idea of my fitness for the post I hope to occupy, I will explain briefly the nature of the matter with which I propose to deal in my future lectures.

"Phthiriology may be divided into four sections: (1) The louse as a zoölogical family; (2) The louse in political history; (3) The louse in sacred history; (4) The louse in literature and art.

"I pass over the first sections, which do not offer much that is new, and take up the others. You are doubtless aware that one particular species of louse

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produces a skin disease called phthiriasis, which is often the cause of death. Many celebrated personages of both ancient and modern times have fallen victims to this horrible malady: Acastus, the accuser of Peleus; Calisthenes of Olynthus, who conspired against Alexander the Great; Pherecydes of Scyros, teacher of Pythagoras; the poet Aleman; Mucius, the legislator; Antiochus IV Epiphanes, famous for his madness and cruelty; Sulla, the dictator; Eunus, who led the terrible revolt of the slaves (Servile War) in Sicily; Herod the Great, child and wife murderer and guilty of the Massacre of the Innocents; the emperors Arnulf and Maximianus; and finally, the ill-famed Philip II of Spain.

"If you will recall the biographies of these illustrious victims of phthiriasis you will notice that most of them are distinguished especially for their cruelty—the examples of Sulla, Herod, and Philip are sufficient—and I believe I am correct in asserting that in the history of mankind the louse holds the honorable post of executioner. He who kills his fellow man is himself killed by the louse.

"Nor does the louse's connection with human affairs end here. Saint-Gervais tells us in his *Histoire des animaux* that at Aremberg in Westphalia they used to choose their mayor in the following manner: All the candidates were made to sit around a table with their heads bent so that all their beards rested upon it. A louse was then placed in the center of the table, which after crawling about for a while would finally climb into one of the beards. The owner of the beard chosen was thereupon proclaimed mayor.



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"As regards sacred history I need only mention that, according to Josephus Flavius,<sup>1</sup> the *kinnim* sent by the Almighty as the third plague in Egypt were lice—which does but confirm my theory that the louse is singled out to be the chastener of the cruel. The Hebrew Talmudists, moreover, moved perhaps by a sense of tardy gratitude, decreed that to kill a louse on the Sabbath is as grave a sin as killing a camel.<sup>2</sup>

"In India a Brahman performed annually the solemn rite of placing a louse on the head of those among the faithful who desired to devote themselves to the practice of patience. Mexican historians tell us (and Bingley confirms this in the third volume of his *Animal Biography*) that Hernando Cortès found several sacks of lice among the treasures of Montezuma, the fruit of a religious tribute from the ancient race of the Aztecs. Nor will I remind you of the lice that lived unmolested upon the body of Benoit Labre, a Frenchman of the eighteenth century who has been beatified.

"The fourth section of phthiriology affords abundant material, but I must not try your patience too severely. I will merely remind you of an oration on the death of a louse by that wag Ortensio Lando,<sup>3</sup> the *Laus pediculi* by the celebrated Daniel Heinsius,<sup>4</sup> and the well-known sonnet by Anton Maria Narducci, an Italian poet of the seventeenth century, who describes the creatures wandering among the fair tresses of his beloved:

<sup>1</sup> Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish Antiquities*.

<sup>2</sup> Jerus. Schabbath, F. 107.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Sermoni funebri di varj autori nella morte di diversi animali*, Vinegia, 1548.

<sup>4</sup> Leyden, 1629.

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"Sembran fere d'avorio in bosco d'oro  
le fere erranti onde si ricca siete."

"Nor have the modern French failed in their praise. If you have read the *Chants de maldoror* by the Comte de Lautréamont, you will certainly remember his wonderful vision of the louse in the second canto. I cannot resist the temptation to repeat its opening phrases.

"Il existe un insecte que les hommes nourrissent à leurs frais. Ils ne lui doivent rien, mais ils le craignent. . . . Aussi faut-il voir comme on le respecte, comme on le place en haute estime au-dessus des animaux de la création. On lui donne la tête pour trône, et lui, accroche ses griffes à la racine des cheveux, avec dignité. Plus tard, lorsqu'il est gras et qu'il entre dans un âge avancé, en imitant la coutume d'un peuple ancien, on le tue, afin de ne pas lui faire sentir les atteintes de la vieillesse."<sup>5</sup>

"But the poetic masterpiece inspired by the louse is certainly that lyric by Arthur Rimbaud entitled *Les chercheuses de poux*. Do you know it?

"... leurs doigts électriques et doux  
Font crépiter, parmi ses grises indolences,  
Sous leurs ongles royaux la mort des petits poux."<sup>7</sup>

"This poem can be compared only—in another form of art—with Murillo's 'Boy Hunting Lice,' which you have certainly seen in the Louvre—unless you choose to give the prize to Robert Burns' famous poem entitled

<sup>5</sup> B. Croce, *Lirici marinisti*, Bari, 1910, p. 186.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, Paris, 1920, p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> A. Rimbaud, *Œuvres*, Paris, 1916, p. 92.



THE CHAIR OF PHTHIRIOLOGY  
"To a Louse," which is not wanting in a sort of burlesque inspiration.<sup>s</sup>

"But I will not weary you with further particulars. This brief sketch will surely have convinced you that phthiriology, being the fundamental and primary science of the interpretation of nature, deserves to have its own chair in that glorious institution, the University of W. I may add that, as far as I am aware, this branch is not taught in any school either in Europe or in America, and I am the one person in the world who has made it the sole object of his studies.

"Looking forward to a favorable answer I am, dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"PROF. DR. JOSIAH KUNIGRUND,  
Corresponding member of the Entomological Academy of Lübeck,

"Correspondent for the *Entomologische Zeitung*,  
"Honorary microtometist to the Zoologisches Institut of Lydenburg."

<sup>s</sup> The whole title is: "To a Louse, on Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church."

## PEDOCRACY

New York, September 2

THEY say there was a time when the aged were in command. They had the monopoly of the cult and of power, and that was gerontocracy. Today we are in the full swing of pedocracy. Children rule everything. It is they who direct and color our civilization. We are in the hands of minors.

One need but look around. The tastes of childhood have become the tastes of the majority, even in literature. The most successful book of recent publication in France is Radiguet's *Le diable au corps*, the work of an adolescent, and in England we have *The Young Visitors*, written by a child of nine.

How comes it that today the novel is the predominant and most remunerative form of literature—the novel, which the world did without for so many centuries? It is because men are become children again and want to be told stories. After all there is but a difference in name between the stories Grandmother used to tell and the novels, say, of James Branch Cabell or of Garnett. *Surréalisme* and dadaism have brought incoherent, infantile prattle into fashion.

In painting the most modern artists draw like children; they have gone back to the ingenuous and clumsy synthesis of the figures we used to see scrawled in copy books or on the walls of lavatories. The *douanier* Rousseau, who at present is so greatly admired, composes and colors like a child of ten or twelve.



#### PEDOCRACY

The same change has taken place in the matter of amusement. The ancient Greeks found their pleasure in tragedy, which in order to be enjoyed called for reflection and culture. Today not only children but men and women of all ages rush to the moving pictures, which, after all, are but the perfection of ancient magic lantern that formed the delight of children of another era. No intellectual effort is demanded of the film lovers; intelligence, that attribute of the adult, is set aside. Today all popular amusements are *visual* rather than *spiritual*—therefore childish.

Competition is what the child loves best in his play—to be the first! In our day man has brought this mania to bear on all things, both on what is futile and on what is serious. To break a record is every one's ideal today; the ideal of the ancients was wisdom, peace, renunciation.

The mania for sport is another symptom; almost all sports are children's games arranged to suit their elders and given importance by advertising and speculation. Children talk about running races, playing ball, and fighting, but adults talk about pedestrianism, football, boxing, and so forth.

And are those machines which are most widely used and best loved anything else than toys greatly enlarged and rendered dangerous? I do not refer to machines that create something, but to those every one uses—the automobile, the gramophone, the radio. Out of a hundred persons who ride in motor cars ten perhaps really need to; for the others it is a game, an amusement, fun! The game of passing other cars, the fun of tooting, and so forth. All childish tricks!

#### A COLLECTION OF GIANTS

This "progressive infantility" is to be found even in philosophy. Reason and dialectics, qualities and strength these of the grown man, must give place to impulse, inconsequence, intuition, in a word, to the irrational, which is characteristic of the child mind.

When children play at shopkeeping it is all a question of bartering, and here is Russia, the country that believes itself to be at the head of human progress, gone back to the exchanging of goods—corn for utensils. The bartering I saw going on in the clandestine markets of Moscow differed not at all from the children's game of former days.

Women, who are always the first to foresee a change, are already aware of what is coming, and are trying to be as much like young men as possible. The ideal of the old-fashioned woman was the matron—that of the modern woman is the stripling.

It has just struck me that the word "priest" is derived from "presbyter," and therefore signifies "old." Is not modern civilization, then, with its tendency towards the hegemony of the adolescent, the very antithesis of priesthood?



#### A COLLECTION OF GIANTS

New Orleans, October 13

I AM not interested in the collections most people go in for. The rich business men who go over to Europe



and gather doubtful Botticellis and Van der Meers, or the tapestries and ivories of a bankrupt aristocracy, simply disgust me.

A new civilization should have new types of collections. The first I thought of making, as soon as I had the means, was a collection of giants. When I was very young I once saw a negro giant in San Francisco, who was exhibiting himself in the different bars with a live green parrot perching on his curly wig. He did not speak, but his eyes begged for him. On this occasion no one gave him anything, and my one cent made him grin for a moment like a thirsty child who sees an orange. I have had a great liking for giants ever since.

It took me nearly a year to complete my collection. The agents I sent to all parts of the world and the managers of circuses and music halls could find me only seventeen in all—sixteen males and one female.

On a plantation in Louisiana, on the banks of the Red River and not far from Colfax, I had prepared a village for the giants alone. I had it built on purpose, with high wooden houses like towers, one for each giant. To simplify matters, a large shed served as kitchen and dining-room and two giants in turn were to attend to this department. Every other morning a truck brought provisions for the colony from Colfax. The plantation was some hundred acres in extent and was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence to keep out the curious. The giants were there for me alone, not to exhibit themselves to children and tramps. I treated them handsomely. Not only were they fed, housed, and clad, but each received three hundred and fifty dollars a month. All told the village cost me thirty-seven thousand dol-

#### A COLLECTION OF GIANTS

lars a year—but no one else in the world could boast of a similar collection.

There was trouble, however, from the very first week. My giants were of different races and could not understand each other. Only three or four spoke English. There were two Norwegians, three Russians, a negro, four Germans, one Italian, one Chinaman, one Sikh from India, three Australians, and one Canadian. The woman was a North American Indian, the only giant we had found in the United States. Although she was plain enough, she was nevertheless one of the main causes of the disaster that overtook my collection. All the men made love to her and each was jealous of the other fifteen, in spite of the fact that honest Jiquilpan was opposed to marriage on principle.

But the greatest danger was ennui. These colossal creatures, torn from their own country, separated from their families and cut off from their former vagabond existence, who could hardly ever talk, either because they did not understand each other or because they hated each other, did not know what to do with themselves.

Whenever I visited the village I would find them keeping apart, silent and inactive. Most of them would be lying on the grass in the shade, like long bundles of rags, and either snoring or yawning. Some would be sulking indoors, dozing or chewing, while a few would be playing cards or sitting before their doors lost in meditation, their arms hanging listlessly, and almost touching the ground. An atmosphere of boredom and irritation lay heavy upon this encampment of wasted strength. The Russians would sometimes sing in a low



#### A COLLECTION OF GIANTS

voice the plaintive melodies of their land. The Germans potted about in an improvised vegetable-garden, while the woman, with her hooked nose, sat bent over, mending her vast chemises. Those gigantic, inactive members, those great, silent mouths, those endlessly long arms doing nothing, those huge bodies motionlessly and aimless, conveyed a sense of bitter despondency amounting almost to dread.

Generally speaking, giants are not intelligent, still less are they intellectual. I never saw one reading; their eyes were vacant, opaque, behind a nostalgic and melancholy veil. No one laughed but the negro, and he only when the bell summoned him to feed. Of an evening these tall shades slouching about listlessly in the fields, weary from inaction, were simply revolting. It was like being in the midst of a colony of idiots and monsters.

They were unwilling to talk to me and did so only when I questioned them. One day I came upon one of my pensioners on the banks of the Red River. It was the Italian, the least degraded of the lot. He was sitting on the grass watching the life of the small animals of the countryside—the butterflies speckled with black balancing themselves on the blossoms, a lizard resting in the sun with its small head cocked, a spider the color of tobacco that was slowly sucking a fly, a sand-colored cricket hopping about among the grasses. I asked the man if he was glad to be here.

"I console myself as best I can," was his answer. "You are very kind, Mr. Gog, but you certainly have succeeded in inventing a fine form of torture. . . ."

#### A COLLECTION OF GIANTS

"You are suffering, then? But why? Have you not everything you want?"

"We lack the one thing that can compensate us for the misfortune of being giants," said he, "the society, the sight, and the admiration of men smaller than ourselves. You must not forget that nearly all of us were used to going about all over the world, some from theater to theater, others showing themselves in circuses or booths, but all enjoying the curiosity of men of medium or low stature. Each one of us was the object of a thousand glances, was an exception, was somebody. It was certainly an original idea, getting all us giants together, but it is hard on us. To be happy the giant, like every one else, must be admired by some one. Here we are all equals, all well over six and a half feet tall, and we are not in the least inclined to admire each other. If you want the truth of the matter, what we feel for each other is loathing, indeed often hatred.

"We need inferiors, spectators, the curious, outsiders, the child who stares at us in wonder, the dwarf cutting his antics at our knees. Here we are all giants and consequently all unhappy. In order to forget I leave the others and come here alone to watch these tiny creatures that for a moment restore the consciousness of my own height and difference. But insects are too unlike men. I assure you, Mr. Gog, that unless you dismiss us, the boldest among us will run away and the others will go mad."

The Italian's prophecy has been fulfilled. In the giants' village after seven months there remained only the admirable Jiquilpan and a pig-headed German who was determined to marry her. Ten had disappeared,



### THE SOUL AS A LEGACY

two or three at a time, without a word of warning. The others had all sickened and, according to contract, I had been obliged to send them back to their own countries. My collection was dispersed. Such is the fate of all collections—of those also which are scattered about over the face of the earth and are called races or families.



### THE SOUL AS A LEGACY

*New Parthenon, January 22*

AN EPISODE I had forgotten has come up again to torment me. Many years ago while I was still in business, one of my partners, George Springhill, killed himself. On the very day the newspapers gave the news of his suicide, I received a strange letter from him. In it he told me that for some time he had been aware that he was going mad and that he preferred to take his own life rather than become a wretched lunatic. He added that his wife would inherit his entire fortune, but that he was leaving me—and here is the strange part of it—his soul!

"My wife, being a woman," he wrote, "would not know what to do with it, and I have no child to whom to transmit it. You are the only person to whom I owe a mark of gratitude, for you alone stood by me when times were hard. I have discovered that a single soul is not enough for a man. Certain inclinations, experi-

### THE SOUL AS A LEGACY

ences, and talents will always be lacking. With two souls you will be able to surpass yourself and others. I beg you not to despise mine, but to cherish it carefully."

Although poor George's death was certainly annoying, for just at that time I stood in need of his help in an important deal that would have given us full control of a railway company, yet I could not help laughing. I thought nothing of the fantastic legacy; it only proved the insanity he had feared. I put the letter away in a place where I keep curious documents and thought no more about it.

Recently, however, I have been much upset by something that is going on within me. I cannot say that my character is altering, but something new is stirring in my spirit, the origin of which I cannot understand. I do not feel that I am changing or losing in any way but rather that I am gaining. At times it happens that I harbor certain thoughts that formerly I should have put from me with scorn, or which would never have entered my head, and I now find pleasure in forms, fancies, and refinements that I once ignored or neglected.

The other day, in speaking of summertime, I used an expression that suddenly evoked a vision of George Springhill, and I remembered that he had been in the habit of using the same words. As a young man George used to write poetry (to my way of thinking this explains his predisposition to insanity), and now I find that I myself am growing more fond of reading poems. He was also passionately fond of music and I, who heretofore have never been able to abide anything in that



### THE SOUL AS A LEGACY

line except perhaps a tune on the gramophone, now feel the need, from time to time, of listening to a little Mozart or Schumann. My sudden curiosity concerning the different religions also reminds me of George, who had once been a Swedenborgian, and on one occasion had tried to get me to join a theosophic lodge.

His was an ardent and passionate spirit—rather too much so, indeed. He brought a sort of romantic frenzy to bear even upon matters of business, which sometimes contributed towards the success of an undertaking—for great industrial victories are not achieved without a certain amount of imagination and enthusiasm—but which more often led to heavy loss. Well, there are now times when I myself am swept by a wave of vague impulse, of sudden sympathy, or of dangerous impatience, that reminds me, I know not why, of my dead friend.

I got out his last letter and read it over again. It is undoubtedly the letter of a madman. It is uncertain whether the soul exists after death, and even if it does man surely cannot dispose of it, since it is destined to meet its own fate in another world. How then is this flowering of new sentiments within me to be accounted for, this growing resemblance between my present spirit and that of the suicide?

Only today, for example, to my surprise I found myself reading Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* with much pleasure, when I suddenly recollected that it had been George's favorite book. The first time he spoke to me about it I glanced at a few pages but could make nothing of it. Moreover I was astonished that a business man should waste his time over certain weird forms of literature. But now . . . !

### THE REPINING EXECUTIONER

My reason tells me that I do but rave! I have never accepted that legacy. I should not know what to do with it. I do not want it. But certain undeniable and inexplicable facts are worrying me. . . .



### THE REPINING EXECUTIONER

*New Parthenon, December 9*

MY POOR Tiapa is not well. He is suffering from suppressed self-esteem. Inaction humiliates him. It is in vain that from time to time I allow him to butcher a goat, a pig, or a calf. All the fowls used in the kitchens die at his hands, and it is strange to observe with what nostalgic sadness he wrings the neck of a hen or turkey.

I can understand how he feels. I can fancy what the feelings of a Ford would be were he condemned to manufacture nothing but toy cars for children and not more than ten a day at that. On the other hand Tiapa is old and no longer fit to follow his former profession. For forty years on end this ponderous Indian functioned as executioner in Mexico as well as in other parts of America and Asia, but now he no longer possesses the necessary strength or precision, and no government would employ his services. And this man, who has taken the lives of thousands of individuals, would be unable to maintain his own had I not taken him in a year ago.



#### THE REPINING EXECUTIONER

Executioners are an improvident lot, and as there are so few of them, their profession is not even included in a trade union.

Tiapa, however, was neither a common laborer nor a timid and indifferent instrument of justice. He was a devotee, an enthusiast, an artist. I believe he was the last executioner of our times on classic lines.

He was an executioner by vocation. His favorite saying is, "Shoulders were made for clubs and trees to hang people on." And how passionate his nature is was revealed by the incident that caused him to abandon his profession. In the country where he was employed a youthful assassin was granted a pardon that he refused to accept, so they turned him over to Tiapa. He was quite happy, saluted the executioner, and even shook hands with him. But all this was strangely irritating to Tiapa. "As long as they rebel and struggle," he declared, "it is all right, but I will not be the accomplice of a suicide." He firmly refused to fulfill his task and as a consequence was dismissed before his time was up.

"Europe," he confided to me, "has lost the secret of killing. The introduction of mechanical means is a sign of decadence in that art. The guillotine is swift, but too geometrical and impersonal. Shooting is the triumph of the superfluous, a useless waste, without counting the fact that the rifle, ennobled by use in warfare and the chase, should not be used for criminals. With their electric chair the United States have reached the extreme of baseness. Electricity, nature's most spiritual force, that which gives us light and wings, to be degraded to the point of murdering murderers! The English, who have kept to old-fashioned hanging, are more

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logical and deferential, although from another point of view the gallows may be regarded as too insipid and primitive—I might even say too ingenuous. To tell the truth, there are only two European nations that display a certain originality in their choice of a form of capital punishment—Spain and Turkey. The garrote and the stake are at least out of the common, and constitute a more than usually severe punishment—but they pale before ancient inventions in this art. Do not forget, moreover, that the Turks are not even Europeans but of Mongolian descent, and are now almost excluded from Europe.

"For the world of white races the period of the Middle Ages was the golden era of legal homicide. The wheel, burying alive, and quartering were delicate operations that demanded a fair amount of skill. Nor were the ancients less clever. Mezentius' form of chastisement, although little used, was an extremely clever invention, and Nero's idea of transforming the human body into a living torch by means of pitch did not deserve to be set aside. To my mind fire is one of the most perfect instruments of justice. From the standpoint of complete annihilation there is nothing to equal a well-prepared pyre composed of resinous wood that is thoroughly dry. There is something classic, poetical, and splendid about it that is pleasing to both the eye and the imagination. The executions that have remained most deeply rooted in man's memory are those in which fire has been the agent. St. Lawrence's gridiron, the flaming pyre of Joan of Arc, the pyre of Savonarola—all these are enrolled upon the great pages of heroism and of history.



#### THE REPINING EXECUTIONER

"Nevertheless, I would not suggest that the ax did not have its good points. It brought the headman into direct, one might almost say intimate, relation with the victim. Not every one could strike off a head at a single blow. Excellent sight and a sure arm were indispensable. And in the case of a person of high degree, such as a king or any one of that sort, there was always the danger of a sense of awe and of consequent trembling. In our profession to be sentimental is a great drawback.

"I cannot understand why crucifixion has been in disuse for so many centuries. It was a fairly long and painful form of punishment and above all, aesthetically pleasing. Too little attention is paid to the aesthetic nowadays. Executions, especially in Europe, take place in the prison yard, furtively, almost in the dark, as if human justice were ashamed of its sentence. I cannot understand this attitude. Either the judges believe that the culprit really deserves death—in which case his death should be surrounded with as much solemnity as possible in order to inspire other delinquents with dread—or they doubt their right to take human life—in which case they should not condemn any one to death.

"In order to perfect myself in my art I have traveled in many lands, and I am bound to confess that in this too Asia can give points to every one. I leave out the Jews, for just as they had no architecture, no sculpture, and no painting, so also they were ignorant of the technique of capital punishment. They resorted to lapidation—but stone-throwing is mere child's play and unworthy of grown men. And note that all could take part in that cowardly, democratic form of punishment;

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in ancient Judea the post of permanent executioner did not exist. The only Hebrew to show the slightest imagination was King Manasses, who—so we are told—had the Prophet Isaiah bound between two boards, which were then sawed through.

"The Egyptians and Assyrians showed far greater genius. When a people rebelled the kings of Babylonia had the guilty flayed alive and the walls of the city hung with the skins. These traditions were passed on to the Mongols, but Tamerlane was more famous for the number than for the quality of his punishments. He acted on wholesale principles and without refinement. The pyramids of skulls he left here and there to mark his passage were not entirely devoid of beauty, but his ways of killing were somewhat ordinary and too swift. The true home of our art is China. When, in my youth, I traveled throughout the Celestial Empire for purposes of instruction, I was able to assist at several of the classical executions for which that highly civilized country is famous. Decadence had already set in, however, and I am told that now, under the republican form of government, things are worse than ever. Even in China they must ape the Europeans, and they have actually stooped to shooting!

"Only once in a town in the province of Kwang-si, did I witness the so-called 'knife punishment,' which to my way of thinking is one of the masterpieces of our profession. At least it is the one that impressed me most deeply. It is well worth seeing. But perhaps you are unaware of its nature. The victim is bound to a tree and the executioner stands in front of him with a sort of basket covered with a cloth. From time to time he



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dips into the basket without looking and pulls out a knife. He reads what is inscribed on the blade and operates accordingly. The basket contains as many knives as there are parts of the body and each is correspondingly inscribed. On this occasion the first one the executioner got hold of must have been marked 'right foot,' for that was the first member I saw chopped from the patient. Then one after the other the left ear, the buttocks, the left hand, the right leg, the upper lip, the two breasts, and the left arm were operated on in the same way. The patient did not scream but only groaned softly. Perhaps he had fainted. I was told that when the victim's family have the means they pay the executioner large sums that he may at once produce the knife inscribed 'head' or 'heart,' in which case the intentions of the inventor are frustrated and the execution shortened. But on the occasion of which I speak the victim must have been poor, for his head was cut off last of all. If the essential requisites of capital punishment are length and variety of suffering, it seems to me that this of the knives should take first place.

"I made friends with the executioner. He was a fine-looking old fellow with a pointed white beard, and he was most affable. He told me that unfortunately this form of punishment had gone out of fashion and could now be carried out only in small provincial towns where the local authorities tolerated it. He confessed to me that even in China the executioner's art is now but lightly esteemed, and that the refinements of the profession are on the point of vanishing. His lamentations come back to me, now that decadence is universal and everywhere apparent. Only in certain parts of America

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and of central Asia are there still death artists who perform their office conscientiously and have not entirely abandoned the good traditions. But I who speak to you, who can boast of nearly two thousand executions in the course of my career, all carried out in perfect order and according to many different methods, am reduced to vegetating in kitchens and contenting myself with taking the lives of common animals for a pastime?"

I once asked Tiapa what sensations he experienced during an execution in his palmy days, and whether he never felt repugnance or remorse for the horrible work he was doing.

"Repugnance? Remorse? Why should I feel either?" was his reply. "In his presence I did not regard my victim as a living being but as a corpse. From the moment sentence was passed this man had been alive only on tolerance and for bureaucratic reasons. He was already legally struck off the list of the living, and I could perform my task with the same composure a physician feels when he dissects and flays a corpse. In my opinion it is the judge who deals death. I was but an instrument, like the cord or the knife. What remorse could I feel? If the decision had been mine to make I would never have killed even a spider. It was the State that handed me a living corpse with orders to rid the world of it. Besides, most of the victims were assassins and I was doing no worse by them than they had done by others who were innocent."

"You must acknowledge, however," I insisted, "that the occupation pleased you and that it satisfied your natural thirst for blood."

"Is not that to my credit?" Tiapa replied. "No one



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can practice a profession honestly and successfully unless he loves it. And as for the thirst for blood, what harm is there in that? If I was born with it I am not responsible. We all follow our inclinations. The painter paints because he loves colors and shapes, the astronomer studies because he has a preference for numbers and the stars, and why then should it appear strange that an executioner should kill because he is blood-thirsty? I cannot understand the prejudice civilized beings cherish against executioners. If you do not want them, you have only to abolish the death penalty; the judges certainly do not apply it to please us, the heads-men. If you will not do this, then thank the Lord that men are born who are disposed to follow this profession, and honor them as they deserve."

"But do you not feel that this sense of nostalgic repining that torments you is an evil, wicked thing?" I asked.

"Try the experiment yourself!" cried Tiapa triumphantly. "Try practicing as an executioner for forty years—and then we will discuss the matter again. I long for heads as the paralyzed sculpture longs for clay and chisel; I suffer as a violinist would suffer whose hands had been cut off; my present discomfort is a proof of the undying love I bore my art. But true artists have always been misunderstood and vilified."

And a tear, a real tear, trickled out of old Tiapa's right eye.

#### COUNTRIES AT AUCTION

*New York, January 1*

I DRANK too much last night and a very strange dream was the result. I thought I was standing beneath a huge cupola of glass that rested directly on the ground without columns or pilasters, like a gigantic globe cut through at the equatorial line. The pavement was neither of wood nor of cement, but of earth rolled smooth and here and there still damp. In the center was a sort of platform covered with posters, the inscriptions carried out in gold letters. A small man—almost a dwarf, indeed—clad in a long red coat was pacing up and down this platform, a hammer in one hand and a bell in the other. Around it stood a few dozen people, almost all women, almost all old, bent, and dressed in mourning.

From what those nearest me were saying (although they spoke in subdued tones) I gathered that this was an auction. The scarlet-clad auctioneer was shouting, ringing his bell, and slashing about with his hammer, but the conflicting echoes that resounded beneath the enormous glass cupola rendered his words incomprehensible. Suddenly a greater silence reigned, or perhaps I had become more accustomed to the buzzing, and I caught what the dwarf was saying:

"Lot number 32. The Kingdom of Persia to go to the highest bidder. Extent, 628,000 square miles. Ten million inhabitants. Contains some first-class artistic and commercial centers. Harbors on the Indian Ocean



#### COUNTRIES AT AUCTION

and the Caspian Sea. The country produces petroleum, fruit, carpets, opium, poets, and dancing-girls in abundance. Three hundred and forty-six miles of railway. First bid forty-seven hundred million."

No hand was raised, no bid was made. The auctioneer waited awhile, his hammer held aloft, then rang his bell and once more began to speak in a weary voice.

"Lot number 33. The Republic of Liberia to be sold to the highest bidder. Over forty thousand square miles in extent—two million inhabitants. Country exporting tropical products and capable of development. Coffee, rubber, ivory, nuts, and palm oil in large quantities. First offer four billions six hundred millions."

Two old women consulted together in a low tone, but presently shook their heads and looked away. No one showed any intention of purchasing the Republic of Liberia. As before, the auctioneer presently began again.

"Lot number 34. Attention, please! This is important. To be sold to the highest bidder, the Union of Soviet Republics with all their territories and dependencies in both Europe and Asia. Country unlimited in extent and possessing inexhaustible riches. More than eight million square miles with a population of one hundred and forty million souls. Splendid bargain! May be successfully exploited by capitalists of all countries. Land fertile, subsoil riches enormous. Corn and wood cheap; petroleum, anthracite, iron, copper, platinum, precious stones, for the asking. Unique opportunity for investors and speculators. May be acquired on installment plan. Initial price nine hundred and seventy-three billions!"

#### COUNTRIES AT AUCTION

As usual no one stirred. The dwarf in red appeared much upset. "Nine hundred and seventy-three billions!" he kept on shouting. "Going for nothing! Good business! Official statistics at buyer's disposal. Easy terms of payment. Nine hundred billions only! Everything included—land and subsoil, cities and railways, harbors and mines, forests and lakes, men and women! Capital redeemed in ten years by petroleum alone! Extraordinary opportunity that will never occur again. Courage, ladies and gentlemen! . . . Only nine hundred billions! Absolutely lowest figure eight hundred and fifty!"

A fat youth standing near me was obviously tempted. I saw him mount the platform and speak in the auctioneer's ear. But he came down again almost at once. "He is too obstinate," said he. "For six hundred and fifty, or even seven hundred, I would have clinched the bargain myself."

The auctioneer again rang his bell and announced a new lot. "Lot number 35. Republic of Nicaragua. Fifty-one thousand square miles, six hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Small country but of great promise. Produces and exports large quantities of sugar, coffee, timber, coconuts, hides, and gold. Auction price—seven billions two hundred millions."

I could not tear myself away, although I was acting just like all the rest—that is, I was not buying anything. It seemed to me that the auction went on for hours and hours. The old women draped in black paced around the platform in couples, paid close attention to the sums the auctioneer was calling out, and made smiling comments. The men were less composed, but not one ventured to raise his hand. Towards the end, however,



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one of them, who looked like a cattle dealer, was bold enough to buy the Republic of Andorra for four millions and a half. "I can always use it for hunting," he remarked half deprecatingly to the old lady beside him.

The auctioneer had laid down his hammer and began mopping his forehead with a red handkerchief the size of a napkin. He seemed exhausted but nevertheless ready to continue up to the last page in the atlas. He was ringing his bell louder than ever for a fresh lot when fortunately I awoke from my absurd and monotonous dream.



A VISIT TO G. B. SHAW

London, October 15

THE venerable G.B.S. received me very badly.

"Like all the other fools," he began, "you think I am a clown. And probably you are hoping to see some of my amusing antics. I am going to disillusion you at once. English people and, generally speaking, all the lazy beings who read and go to the theater take me for a buffoon. But on the contrary, I am, both by nature and by vocation, the most serious person in the United Kingdom. As you may know, I began by being a Fabianite and an Ibsenite. These two tendencies prove that mine is a supremely anti-humorous mind. There is not the faintest trace of humor in either Fabianism or Ibsenism. The first proposes, in the course of two or

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three centuries, to make laborers *over* into so many bourgeois; the second would render human relations perfectly sincere, which is the same as saying to render them impossible. Fabianism is the socialism of humanists; Ibsenism is the morality of anarchists. Neither one system nor the other is gay—they are both honestly meant ineptitudes, therefore in no wise amusing.

"You can see from this that my reputation as a buffoon is as undeserved as was Byron's as a poet or Shakespeare's as a dramatist. Byron was an amateur controversialist and Shakespeare a philosophizing lyricist. Mind, I do not say this by way of comparison—you will admit that I am so superior to both as to render any just comparison impossible. I feel deep pity for all men, for the sole reason that no one of them is fortunate enough to be G. B. Shaw."

"But if this be so, what then has given rise to your reputation as a humorist?" I ventured.

"I will tell you at once. I am an Irishman. Now for the scum of London, that is, for those who buy books and newspapers, an Irishman must ever and always be either a hungry beggar or a clown. You probably know that Ireland supplies England with all her celebrities—Scotus Erigena, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Burke, Sterne, Berkeley, Swift, Wellington, Thomas Moore, Yeats, Oscar Wilde, and Joyce are all Irishmen. Without the Irish England would never have known anything about Lilliput, nor would she have conquered Napoleon. A Baltic count, Keyserling, has said that the English are like the animals. I, if you like, am the boggy man of these animals. These mutes lack the courage to speak, and it is on their behalf that I declare truths. These



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melancholy beings do not know how to laugh, and I must strive to make them smile, at least. These masochists are oblivious to enjoyment, and it is my task to cudgel them and thereby awaken in them some slight quiver of pleasure.

"My undeserved success rests upon these peculiarities of the English. Were England a country as advanced in disparagement as she is in trade, I would be only an ill-paid, obscure, and insignificant journalist. In France there are at least a hundred Shaws who pass unobserved. And it is precisely owing to this that I am one of the many victims of the war. After 1918 Victorian England breathed its last. The English are becoming unprejudiced, immoral, skeptical, cynical, slightly Freudian, slightly Bolshevik, and they no longer shrink from the scandalous when it is well presented. My popularity, therefore, is obviously on the wane. So long as I alone waved the red rag in front of John Bull all went well, but British bulls, becoming used to all shades of red, no longer dread me—which is as much as to say that I no longer amuse them. Soon, unless a puritanic reaction sets in, I shall be put in the anthologies beside Goldsmith and Macaulay. It would spell ruin for me. If the English start becoming like me, all that will be left for me will be to become a Methodist minister in Mrs. Grundy's service. But I am too old to start learning to lie all over again."

"Old?" I cried. "You do not seem so. Your mind is certainly not more than twenty!"

"Not bad that, for a beginner," he replied. "Your accusation masquerading as a compliment is not bad at all. In a nice way you tell me that I think like a boy. I

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am not in the least offended, however. But I have seventy reasons for being dissatisfied with my age. The only real infelicity in life is death. A man cannot complete his education in less than a century, and he should have at least two centuries more wherein to turn that education to account. But instead we are reduced to Voronoff, who does more for the chastity of the ape than for the immortality of man. All this talk about scientific progress is barefaced charlatanism; until science shall have abolished death it will have accomplished nothing. What good can it do me to fly over to New York in half an hour if one day I am to be shoveled away under a slab of stone to rot?"

At this point G.B.'s expression became lowering and forbidding and for a time he remained lost in thought. Then, turning to me, he shouted angrily:

"Do you know the secret for not dying? No? Then get out of my way! I have no use for another being under sentence of death. I am not a clown. I am the most serious of men. I am the only human being who refuses to have anything to do with that grotesque farce—a funeral!"

And thus speaking, he turned his back on me and rushed away to the seclusion of his cottage.



## MORAL SURGERY

*London, June 18*

DOCTOR ANOSH-UTHRA came to see me at Claridge's to propose his treatment, which he says is beginning to be regarded with favor throughout England. An undersecretary at the Colonial Office who has tried it speaks enthusiastically of it, and it was he who sent the doctor, or rather the surgeon, to rout me out at my hotel.

Anosh-Uthra, who boasts of Persian, almost royal descent, is still young but more dignified and serious than any one I have ever met. His countenance of a leaden hue vaguely tinged with gold is dominated by a dark and flowing beard that reaches halfway down his chest and gives him the appearance of one of those Assyrian kings in the British Museum. His eyes are hidden from view behind round smoked glasses. To converse with him is like talking over the telephone with some person who is not only absent but masked as well.

"I do not know," he began, "whether our mutual friend has given you an idea of my system of therapeutics. Its origin is very simple. In the course of my studies I have been struck by two facts, namely, that no one is able to cure mental disorders, not even the overrated Freud himself, and that on the other hand general medicine is far less efficacious than surgery as a definite cure. My own discovery consists in having found the means of introducing surgery in the treatment of men-

## MORAL SURGERY

tal disorders. I may define myself as the first surgeon of the soul.

"I am aware that certain surgeons have tried to intervene in the treatment of purely nervous maladies and that attempts have been made to cure epilepsy by means of endocrine grafting. But here we have purely physical operations employed against psychic disorders. I, on the contrary, operate directly on the spirit by spiritual means. There are parts of our souls that rot, that become gangrenous or enlarged to the detriment of other parts. There are moral cancers, intellectual tumors; there is the appendicitis of habit or of vice. Now I am in a position to obtain at will the radical extirpation of the spiritual organ or zone that is the cause of the trouble. I have already relieved my different patients of apathy, of sensuality, of the mathematical spirit, of avarice, and of diffidence. If you are haunted by the fear of death, if you have difficulty in digesting the excessive amount of culture you have had to swallow, if political or sporting ambitions leave you no peace, you have but to apply to me. My operations are rapid and painless. I do not oblige you to confess after the manner of the Viennese magician; I do not resort to hypnotism as they do at Nancy, nor make you tell your dreams as you would have to do in Zurich; and still less do I cut your flesh and lay you open."

"Could you give me some particulars of your way of operating?" I inquired.

"If I did you would not understand," said he. "You must know that Anosh-Uthra is not my real name. Those Iranian words mean 'Man-Angel' and are the name of the Messiah of the Mandaean religion. Like



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all secrets, mine also comes from Asia, and it cannot be expressed in Occidental language. But I maintain that successful experiments are more obvious and convincing than any theory. Put yourself under my care and I will free you from anything that may be troubling you.

"I would furthermore point out that I do not confine my operations to evil qualities, to what moralists call 'faults' and psychiatrists, 'forms of madness.' If, for example, you suffer from an immoderate love for your neighbor or from a philosophic or religious mania that threatens to destroy your peace of mind, I am ready to intervene on the same terms. There are virtues that can be more painful than sins.

"Picture to yourself the transformation our species will undergo when my moral surgery shall be practiced everywhere. At last every man will be able to possess the spirit of his choice. The systematic removal of remorse and dread will bestow upon man that peace he has hitherto sought in vain in stoicism and the different religions. Remember also that as physical disease originates in the mind, when the mind is healed you will enjoy perfect bodily health as well. Give my methods a trial. Are you worried by a greed of gain, by superstitions, envy, or jealousy? It is an easy matter to remove these failings. I must warn you, however, that it cannot be done all at once. At least three months will be necessary for each one of the troubles I have mentioned. This is no time at all if you consider how interminably long are the methods employed by psychiatrists. To be quite honest with you, I must further warn you that, although I am indeed able to take from your

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soul, I can add nothing to it. I am a thaumaturgist but not a god.

"The price of each operation varies according to the difficulties it represents. My prices range from five hundred to three thousand pounds sterling—half the amount to be paid in advance."

"In case of a general infection," I asked, "would it be possible to amputate the whole soul?"

"That is an operation I have not yet performed," Anosh-Uthra replied, stroking his long beard. "One might try, however. . . ."



#### SIR J. G. FRAZER AND MAGIC

*London, November 3*

AN UNEXPECTED and fortunate meeting at the house of a collector of fetishes afforded me the opportunity of listening for a few minutes to Sir James George Frazer, who I am told is the greatest living anthropologist. My passion for the life of the savage—which is probably the result of atavism—had recently led me to skim through the famous *Golden Bough*, and I was thus better able to understand the words of this illustrious paleontologist of the human soul.

At the tea table a clever maneuver on the part of my collector friend brought the conversation round to the question of magic, and Sir James could not well



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avoid taking part in it. Although he is well advanced in years and has worked hard his whole life long, he still carries himself with a jaunty, youthful air and his eyes still shine with the light of a keen intellect—eyes that are both judicial and humorous.

"Modern man," he began, "is overcontemptuous of magic, and people of a practical, scientific turn regard the sorcerers of past ages, as well as those who still study them, with a sort of contemptuous pity. Such persons are ungrateful and wanting in respect for their maternal parent. The whole of modern civilization—and by modern I mean that the civilization that began with the Greece of Socrates and which, after a break of a few centuries, flowered and bore fruit during the Renaissance, and has gone on doing so down to the present day—the whole of that civilization, then, is the lawful offspring of magic. Every one of our arts, laws, political traditions, and sciences has sprung straight from the magic of primitive man. Magic was the one and indispensable bridge between animalism and culture. All of those who now jeer at magic are children or grandchildren of the ancient magicians and cousins of those witches who still work their spells among savage peoples.

"I have hinted at these truths here and there in my works, but as yet no one has seen fit to recognize and collate them. Let us begin with the arts. As regards music the point has been most convincingly proved by the French musicologist Combarieu. In remotest times music was but a branch of the art of incantation. As you all know, the theater itself is a derivative from primitive liturgical ceremonies, ceremonies that were

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fundamentally magical; and dancing, as Hien has shown, had the same origin. As much may be said of poetry also. The most ancient fragments of the Veda and of archaic Latin literature are magical formulas, powerful words that, assisted by rhythm, were supposed to ward off evil or to bring us the gifts of the gods. The primitive paintings we find in caves were the work of witches who, staking their faith on one of the basic principles of sympathetic magic, used these images to bring good fortune in the chase to paleolithic man. To create an image means, to the sorcerer, to acquire power over the object represented. Sculpture owes its origin to the same principle. You are certainly aware that in medieval days a sure means of killing an enemy was to make a small statue of him in clay or wax and either run it through with a sharp instrument or expose it to the flames. Whatever was done to the statuette the original model would suffer. Egyptian sculpture, which is so truly realistic, was but a magical means of preserving corporeal integrity after death, with a view to the hoped-for resurrection. The most archaic forms of architecture, such as the dolmens and the cromlechs, served, as we all know, in the performance of mysterious rites that were rather magical than religious. If you would have further proofs you have but to read an essay by my friend Salomon Reinach, which appeared in *Anthropologie* in 1903.

"As for morals and legislation, I have demonstrated clearly enough in *The Psyche's Task* that the elementary ethical principles which still rule our way of living, and on which our codes are formed, were established and sanctified by what we now term 'superstition,' which is,



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in nearly every case, pure magic. Inhibitions founded on taboo are at the bottom of our morality. It was believed, for example, that illicit intercourse between a man and a woman was detrimental to the success of the chase or to the fertility of the fields, and consequently such intercourse was strictly forbidden. Thus there was created in man that horror of the adulterer which—although much attenuated—still endures in our customs. Today we condemn him for other reasons, but we might never have reached the point of condemning him at all had it not been for the preparatory influence of magic.

"The first kings of the first tribes were sorcerers, and when later on they became warriors, they remained ever subject to the domination of the wielders of occult powers. The first theocracy was magical and the power exercised by the sorcerers over the warriors was that of the spirit over force. In ancient kings traces of the sacred and magical can always be discovered, and until within a few centuries the miraculous power of curing certain diseases by the laying on of hands was attributed to the monarchs of both England and France. The primitive Magian king was bound to surrender his own life in expiation if misfortune befell his country, and we may see a trace of this custom in modern sovereigns, who consider it their duty to hasten to the scene of any great disaster, even at the risk of their own lives.

"As Lenormand has shown, science itself, the proud science of our own day, is closely akin to magic. Magic assumes, in fact, that certain phenomena will surely follow upon other phenomena, without the intervention of

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extraneous forces. Like science, magic rests upon determinism, that is, upon implicit faith in an ordained and homogeneous reality. The magician did not pretend to violate facts but, acquainted as he was with the secret affinities and the order which they follow, he went no further than to imitate that phenomenon which was the constant antecedent of the one desired. His mistakes and failures were the result of a faulty observation of these unchanging rules of sequence, and of substantial connections. But the basic principle was the same as that on which modern science has been founded. Every child knows that chemistry derives from alchemy, astronomy from astrology, and scientific medicine from Hermetism.

"I need not mention religion, for every one familiar with antiquity must perceive its connection with magic. Even now in many regions it is indistinguishable from the grossest witchcraft. We have but to consider the success enjoyed in countries of the broadest culture by the theosophic and occult schools, to convince ourselves that even in the present era magic responds to the spiritual needs of millions of individuals.

"Our entire civilization, then, originated in the beliefs and practices of magic, and a pessimist resorting to a mild form of sophistry might well declare that contemporary culture has not yet passed beyond the magic stage. All nations are avid of miracles and demand them of every one—of demagogues, somnambulists, electricians, mediums, of the private prophetess and of professors of physics and chiromancy. Undoubtedly the savages are our parents, sometimes also our brothers,



A.C. AND W.C.  
and magic is the beneficent matrix that, as I said at the beginning, has brought forth all our arts, our morals, and our sciences. The intellectuals one and all are but better developed, more cautious, and more enlightened sorcerers."

Sir James George Frazer ceased speaking and no one else appeared to have anything to say. Presently the gifted anthropologist took his leave. For my part, since I recalled that my mother was a Maori the high esteem in which I have always held myself has been increasing very rapidly.



A.C. AND W.C.

*London, August 3*  
I HAVE just left a huge restaurant de luxe. Horrible! There can be nothing more disgusting than all these mouths opening, these thousands of teeth chewing. These eager, avid, and shining eyes, these jaws constantly rotating, these cheekbones gradually getting redder and redder. . . . The existence of public eating-houses is the strongest proof we have that man has not yet graduated from the animal phase. I am appalled by this lack of modesty even in those who deem themselves superior, refined, and gifted. The fact that the human intellect does not yet associate mastication with defecation demonstrates our gross insensibility. Only certain Oriental monarchs and the popes of Rome

A.C. AND W.C.

have grasped the propriety of remaining without witnesses at one of the most distressing moments of our corporeal servitude, and have elected to eat in private, as we should all do.

There will come a time when our habit of eating in company, even out of doors and in the presence of strangers, will be regarded with amazement, just as today we read with disgust that the cynical Diogenes was wont to satisfy his most filthy instincts in the public square. The necessity of gulping down fragments of plants and animals in order to sustain life is one of the worst humiliations of human existence, one of the most distressing signs of our subordination to the earth and to death. But instead of satisfying this need in secret we make it a joyous occasion, a public ceremony, and offer it as a daily spectacle—and this with all the indifference of the brute!

At my home, the New Parthenon, I have long since abolished the antediluvian practice of feeding in common. Here and there throughout the corridors are closed doors bearing brass plates on which are engraved the two letters A.C. All my guests know that here, at any hour of the day, food and drink may be found. The rooms are small but light and airy, and each contains a table and a single chair. Any one who is hungry enters one of these rooms and bolts the door. When he is satisfied he comes out stealthily and returns to his work or to his rest. Waiters especially appointed for the purpose visit these closets several times a day, removing the dirty plates and bringing fresh supplies of well-cooked food that will remain hot for many hours. Each "alimentary closet" has a lavatory next



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door, arranged according to the most modern principles of hygiene.  
How many centuries will have to elapse before my system is adopted for every human dwelling?



### A VISIT TO KNUT HAMSDUN

*Christiania, August 24*  
I INQUIRED in a bookshop who was the greatest living Norwegian writer and the answer was, "Knut Hamsun." So I shall have to make this Hamsun's acquaintance. I have never read anything of his, but being here in Norway with no intention of ever returning and having, moreover, nothing better to do, I have decided to include this individual in my collection of "memorable interviews."

I like all I have heard about him. He has known hunger (like myself), was once a tramp in the United States (like myself), and avoids the company of his fellow men as much as possible (again like myself). I am told he lives on a lonely island and seldom visits a city. In 1920 they gave him the Nobel Prize. A secretary at the American Legation has promised to obtain a pass that will admit me to his presence.

*September 2*

Yesterday I was at last able to interview this Knut Hamsun. He impressed me most favorably. A man over

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sixty, he is very well preserved, and sports a pair of mustaches that give him the air of a military man in his prime. He has a rather sad, open countenance, which at times assumes an expression of severity. He speaks English fluently and does not stand on ceremony. I like him.

"I have consented to receive you," he said, "because you are neither a beggar, an intellectual, a journalist, one of the unemployed, a publisher, a collector of autographs, nor an admirer. All such people are nefarious and insufferable. I defend myself against them as a knight might defend himself against brigands, but I am not always successful. I have put an arm of the sea between them and myself, but the creatures know of the existence of boats and do not hesitate to make use of them.

"You are fortunate enough not to know what glory is. May you always be spared the misfortune of acquiring it! To be famous means both to grow old and to suffer persecution. To achieve celebrity signifies to become transformed into a living corpse that is stripped of everything. The younger generation and your rivals regard you as a half-exanimate survival, and treat you as such. Fame is a forerunner of catalepsy and the grave. Are you renowned? Then you have already given everything and are a fit subject for an autopsy, for vivisection. 'We have already compensated you,' they say. 'Now take your crowned head and glutted carcass out of the way and make room for the still obscure.' Whatever you may produce will always be inferior to that which raised you to fame. Glory is but a certificate of impotence. It is also a prison house. In spite of your-



A VISIT TO KNUT HAMSON

self you become the object of special surveillance. You cannot hire a house, enter a café, or start on a journey without the fact's becoming known at once to thousands of people who print it and spread it broadcast. It is useless to seek solitude. They will surely rout you out, and what they cannot discover about you they will invent.

"But all this is nothing! The worst is that fame delivers you into the hands of honest thieves. Everybody wants something. Out of every hundred letters I receive at least ninety ask for something. Out of every twenty visitors, nineteen end by carrying away with them what they came after.

"Then there is the absent admirer who wants me to make him a present of my complete works; the individual who wants a dedication or an autograph for his collection; the person who asks for my photograph and my life story; the man who really must see me that I may advise, judge, help, enlighten, and redeem him. Since receiving the Nobel Prize I have been perpetually bombarded with requests for money. Any excuse serves their purpose—illness, patents, educational expenses, unavoidable journeys, a paralyzed father, a crazy mother, consumptive sisters, forced marriages, subscriptions for monuments, for centennials, tombs, colleges, decayed aristocrats, hospitals for animals, Arctic expeditions, and national catastrophes. Had I listened to all these demands the whole of Nobel's fortune would not have sufficed to save me from being reduced to poverty once more.

"There are some who seem to believe that my celebrity stands for omnipotence. 'If everybody knows him,'

A VISIT TO KNUT HAMSON

they reason, 'of course he must know everybody, and therefore be able to get anything he wants.' You know as well as I do that this is a gross error. A writer may be very famous yet have relations only with a few friends and those in no wise influential. But these obstinate petitioners are either ignorant of this or will not believe it, and not a week passes that some one does not demand the impossible of me—that I obtain a lucrative post for him without delay, that I get a leading publisher to bring out his book, that I recommend him to a big 'daily' for a well-paid position on the staff, that I petition a minister or academy for pecuniary aid, a traveling scholarship, or a pension. It is absolutely true that living in solitude as I do I neither know nor frequent those who dispense such favors, but even if I did know them, that does not mean that they would grant my requests merely because my name is Knut Hamson. I should have to write innumerable letters, wear holes in settees in antechambers—that is, give away my time, which is an artist's most precious possession—and lend my name as a guarantee for persons with whom, more often than not, I am unacquainted. If out of weakness I do sometimes comply with a demand and obtain what the petitioner has sought, then I am in for it! They are never satisfied. They come back and ask again and always for bigger things; and after they have had a thousand they drop you on the day you are unable to give them even ten—not, however, without giving rein to their indignation and insulting you.

"Then there are the people who send me books or manuscripts and demand that I read them and give my opinion in writing; and the pestiferous interviewers



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who take you away from your work or your rest for an hour that they may make a little money at your expense!

"In a word everybody wants something from the celebrity. He has given the blind rabble a little light, brought a little heat to cold hearts, put a few thoughts into empty heads. He has given a part of himself, of his blood, his soul, his very life, to enrich the souls of others and relieve the sadness of their lives. He has given, and precisely because he has given he must go on giving always, endlessly, not only of his spirit but of his wealth, his days, his work, and some crumbs also of his glory. The celebrated author is surrounded by parasites, beggars, gravediggers, thieves. Fame is not a reward but a curse, a punishment. If I had known this in time I would have gone forth and murdered Brandes in 1890, when he made known to Europe my first book, *Hunger*. After all, it is better to be hungry than celebrated.

"Take your own case, now; you certainly have not asked me for anything, but you have taken something from me—half an hour of my time and a little of my strength. You also are one of the honest thieves, a well-mannered thief, but a thief for all that!"

Although this apposite observation did not offend me, I could not fail to see that my only decent course was to rise and take my departure. Knut Hamsun was obviously pleased to see me go and on the threshold he shook my hand vigorously.

I like Knut Hamsun—I like him very much indeed. I am going to buy all of his works and thus delicately compensate him for the time he spent on me.

ILLNESS AS A MEDICINE

Reykjavik, July 13

HAVING a far greater fondness for volcanoes than for my fellow men, I came up here on purpose to see Mount Hekla. A couple of days ago, however, I suddenly felt ill. I had dull pains all over me, especially in my neck, but I was not feverish. I asked for a doctor who could speak English fluently. That same evening there stood before me a human reproduction of a kobold—a round belly, round face, round eyes—and a round glass in the right one—a short nose, short legs, short arms, and fat, ever-moving hands.

"I am Doctor Harold Olafsen," he informed me in excellent English. "Tell me why you have sent for me."

While I described my symptoms to him Dr. Olafsen's right eye peered at me from behind its monocle, and his thick lips twisted themselves into a sarcastic grin.

"Do you perhaps expect me to free you from this malady?" he inquired.

I replied that such had indeed been my purpose in summoning him. The round goblin frowned darkly and seemed to hesitate between an outburst of ribald laughter and one of rage. Presently, however, he controlled himself and resumed his composure.

"Never would I be guilty of so unworthy an act," he declared. "I have no wish to be tormented by remorse, nor on the other hand can I do violence to my special method to please you. You are a foreigner and cannot



#### ILLNESS AS A MEDICINE

know certain things. I really cannot understand why they gave you my name. No one on this island would call me to his bedside, and in fact all die prematurely, owing to the fatal intervention of ordinary physicians. If you wish to live you must not set out to fight your malady, which is undoubtedly providential and beneficent. The most I would undertake to do would be to provide you with another malady to help the first. . . ."

My first impulse was to request Dr. Olafsen to leave me, as he either would not or could not relieve my sufferings. But the attraction that lunatics have always had for me carried the day, and I pretended to take his expressions in good part, in the hope of getting him to reveal himself in all his absurdity.

"I am quite ready to adopt your method," I replied, "if you will be kind enough to enlighten me concerning its basic principles."

Dr. Olafsen's pomegranate-colored countenance broadened into a crooked but triumphant smile. I concluded that for a long time no one had been willing to listen to him.

"My system," he began, "originated in a profoundly wise pronouncement of the Hippocratic school, which physicians have of course neither considered nor studied. According to Hippocrates, then, health is a 'metron,' a state of equipoise between two opposites, and excessive good health is dangerous in that it foreshadows the approach of illness. You may not have read the Hippocratic writings, but at school you surely had to translate the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus. In verses 1001-03 the sublime poet causes the chorus to utter this great truth: 'Health that is too florid is alarming,

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for its neighbor, disease, is ever ready to overpower it.'

"Here we have a first suggestion of the great saving thought. The true principle stands as follows: Illness is as necessary as health for the perfect functioning and preservation of the human body. He who is well has a hidden malady, as experience has proved. If the disease becomes manifest we must respect it and not disturb its course. Only when it goes too far and threatens to overthrow the equilibrium is it advisable to inoculate the germ of another disease capable of combating and counterbalancing the first. Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, glimpsed part of this truth—that only the disease can combat the disease. But like the allopaths he was dominated by the old conviction that the malady must be uprooted, striven against, cured. That is a widespread, dangerous, often fatal error.

"We must bring ourselves to understand that *mala-dies are nothing less than medicines*. An illness is a safety valve, a means of escape, a reaction against the excesses of health, Nature's precious preventive. Illnesses should be cherished, cultivated, provoked. This should not astonish you. When a man continues too long in a state of alarmingly good health (which is a constant danger-signal) it becomes necessary to subject him to energetic treatment, to give him the disease best suited to restore the equilibrium of his organism. The disease must of course not be too acute, but an attack of fever is often the saving of the lymphatic subject, and a good bout of anemia is the best thing for the plethoric. It is the doctor's business to decide which disease the apparently healthy really need. That this theory is correct is proved by a fact that all historians



ILLNESS AS A MEDICINE

have pointed out, namely, that sickly individuals live far longer than the more robust. Woe to him who is not frequently ill! Usually Nature herself provides, but when she delays, the physician must come to the rescue.

"Thus only in two cases should rational medicine intervene—to give a disease to one persisting in keeping well, and to give a disorder to one who is already ill for the purpose of either attenuating or reinforcing the first illness, which has supervened naturally. In a word, the true physician must be a *novaphorist*. That is to say, one who brings disease. The old-fashioned means can he save men's lives. The old-fashioned conception of the doctor endeavoring to suppress the symptoms of the disease has had its day and belongs to the barbaric phase of pathology. The only thing that still enables ordinary physicians to hold their own is human cowardice. Mankind dreads pain, will not suffer, and must therefore have recourse to these charlatans, who boast that they can end suffering, and who do, alas! sometimes succeed in putting it to sleep by means of poisonous and deadly drugs. These unfortunates do not know that pain, even physical pain, is as necessary for man as pleasure, just as illness is as necessary as health. But as there may be an excess of illness that is as dangerous as an excess of health, we can and must intervene only to set up a new malady against that already established in the patient. There are already some who are beginning to adopt my method, albeit in secret, and I am aware that certain psychiatrists combat progressive paralysis by inoculating the germs of

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malaria—always, however, with the absurd intention of curing.

"The era of realistic and synthetic medicine has its beginning in me alone. Thus far, sad to relate, I have succeeded in convincing only a few adepts, and they unfortunately cannot practice, for they are not regular physicians. However, the future belongs to my great principle—disease as a medicine!"

"Your theories strike me as admirable," said I, "and I am tempted to try your method. What would you advise in my case?"

Dr. Olafsen did not take long to consider. "Let your pain take its course, stimulating it perhaps with a weak dose of caffeine. If it has not left you in a day or two I should advise producing hyperpyrexia—running a good temperature—round about 103° or 104°."

I promised to obey his orders and the doctor departed in high glee. As soon as he was out of sight I took two tablets of aspirin. I am feeling better this morning and before night shall be leaving by steamer for Copenhagen.



## AN EMPEROR AND FIVE KINGS

*The Hague, December 3*

HIS MAJESTY WILLIAM, Emperor and King, has deigned to receive me in his castle at Doorn. With that gray beard of his he might be any honest fellow who



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has withdrawn from the world for the sake of a quiet life after experiencing some sort of disappointment.

"I have prepared a surprise for you," he said, as soon as I had performed the acts of homage prescribed, "a great surprise. You have come at an exceptional time. Today there is a meeting of kings in my drawing-room. You will find a pentarchy of sovereigns in there. I think you are very fortunate, for in American assemblies such as this must be somewhat rare." And his Majesty smiled genially without a shade of irony.

"I must warn you, however, that they are not all reigning monarchs. One was driven out by a revolution because he was weak; the second was deprived of his throne because of his despotism; the third abdicated because he was tired of wielding power—but the fourth is a famous tragedian who has acted kingly parts in all the world's leading theaters, and the last is a charming lunatic who is insane only in that he believes himself to be king of I know not what country. All five are well worth knowing. And now follow me."

The emperor-king, preceded by a couple of footmen in gala livery and followed by his adjutant and myself, entered a spacious and handsome apartment where five persons rose to their feet on perceiving him and made respectful obeisance.

"Pray continue your discussion," his Majesty said in a friendly tone. "We have come here to listen to you."

"Your Majesty is too kind," the most venerable of the five replied, "and we cannot do otherwise than avail ourselves of the permission you have granted. I was just saying that a king who performs the offices

AN EMPEROR AND FIVE KINGS

of a sovereign only on certain solemn occasions and makes his pronouncements in the finest and most eloquent language the ear can listen to, is happier and more fortunate than one who is obliged to exercise his royal prerogatives every day and on all occasions."

"Nothing of the sort!" cried the youngest of the five. "Let me speak, for to me experience has revealed the loftiness of our almost divine dignity. The fact that foreign intrigue still separates me from my people does not prevent me from sensing to the full the delights and responsibilities of power. A king must be a king always; he is a king in all the glorious sense of the word even when he is smoking or asking for a handkerchief. Louis XIV gave the world the true model of the hero-king!"

"Very true," the other ventured, "and as a matter of fact, I myself acted upon these principles during the years of my reign. I strove indeed to bring monarchy back to the ancient splendors of undisputed, integral power. I had in mind not only Louis XIV but Constantine and Charlemagne—Peter the Great and Frederick II as well. The king must be surrounded with all the prestige magnificence confers, nor must he relinquish any smallest part of those privileges which God has bestowed upon him for the nation's good. The nation is but a blind and impetuous child and must be guided with a firm hand by a loving but stern parent. For my part, however, I received only ingratitude. The audacious mob, at the instigation of yet more audacious agitators, seized an absurd pretext for rebelling, and I was forced to go into exile, notwithstanding the heroism of my noble army."



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"My case is somewhat different," observed another, a man of placid and distinguished bearing. "I cherished the mistaken idea that it is better to be loved than feared, and I yielded all too freely to the passing caprices of my subjects. I mingled with the humble, spent my civil list in benefactions, was a patron of the arts, and arranged my life on lines of Spartan simplicity. When my subjects demanded that the constitution be reformed I yielded without useless demur; when they asked for universal suffrage I extended it even to the women and to minors. But all to no purpose. Emboldened by my ready compliance with previous requests, which they interpreted as weakness, they finally reached the point of demanding my abdication. I naturally refused, whereupon a revolution suddenly broke out, which forced me to withdraw."

"I have been the wisest of all," said the last of the group. "From my earliest youth I had always had a great idea of monarchy. In fancy I saw Alexander the Great in the midst of his barbaric court, young, handsome, victorious, godlike; I saw Solomon the Wise in his temple of gold surrounded by his warriors just receiving the tribute from Ophir and the princesses of Ethiopia; I beheld St. Louis of France living like a recluse, fighting like a hero, and dying like a saint; and I believed then, as I believe now, that kings are as necessary to a people as are parents to children, and that it is their task to be the mystical and glorious personification of a nation's greatness. On becoming king, I immediately perceived that the reality in our day is an entirely different matter. Nations no longer

AN EMPEROR AND FIVE KINGS

regard monarchy in a religious light, no longer see in their king their natural protector, their shining center, their almost supernatural symbol. Eighteenth-century drivel has defiled the minds of the simple and poisoned those of the intellectual. Monarchs themselves no longer possess the sense of well-justified security that made them the rightful and respected leaders of a nation rather than the highest officials of democratic bureaucracy. The last king who attempted to impersonate the monarch of past times in the midst of modern decadence was Ludwig II of Bavaria, but he went out of his mind, or at least was regarded as a madman. To escape the same fate, after a few years of humiliating experiences and daily disappointments, like Charles V and Diocletian I abdicated, and I now contemplate the mosaic that is this world of ours with the eyes of a stoic and the heart of a Christian."

"That is pure cowardice!" cried the victim of intrigue. "A true king may abdicate only on his death-bed."

"It was precisely because my conception of my mission was too lofty that I would no longer reign, for I was bound to perceive that our era, infected as it is with the gangrene of equalitarian civilization, would no longer permit me to fulfill that mission worthily."

"Reality may be revolting," he who had spoken first put in, "but we can always take refuge in fancy and the mythical, in which no revolutionary movement is possible and from which no human power can drive us forth. The king is a masterpiece of the days of heroism and poetry, and in these times can live only in art."



#### AN EMPEROR AND FIVE KINGS

"I cannot agree with you there!" the monarch who had been deprived of his throne by a rebellion exclaimed hotly. "This loathsome epoch is surely but a hiatus in the history of mankind. Taught by experience, nauseated by the various forms of modern lunacy, the nations will again return to our feet, invoke us as saviors, and once more we shall behold the shining thrones of the Roi Soleil and the great Frederick."

"I admire your optimism," said the king who had suffered for his kindness, "but unfortunately I see no signs of repentance. Modern man has lost his respect for the royal title so completely as to speak openly of a rubber king, or a king of saucepans. As you undoubtedly know, there are also beach queens and market queens. I am beginning to think that man's insanity is both progressive and incurable. Nothing short of a world cataclysm, which I really have not the heart to invoke for my fellow men, would ever lead to the restoration of those perfect States in which the king was regarded as God's mandatory and the autocratic shepherd of his flock."

While we waited for a sign from our host no one spoke. The five monarchs, rapt, solemn, and lost in meditation, seemed to have become petrified. Finally a door was thrown open and the two footmen appeared again. Hereupon we all formed a procession and marched out to the park, pausing beneath the giant trees that are so silent and patient. With close attention the emperor-king scanned the faces of his real and make-believe colleagues; then, turning to me, he whispered:

"As a matter of fact the one who has the most regal

#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

air and bearing is our famous tragedian. Can it be that after all poetry is truer than truth, as Goethe said?"



#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

*Amsterdam, End of April*

THE other day in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam I discovered the strangest shop I have ever come across. From the outside it looked like any other shop. A sign painted dark-red bore the proprietor's name in letters of gold: Ben-Chusai.

The only thing that appeared unusual was that the two spacious show-windows on either side of the door, which were draped with black velvet, were *empty*. On the first occasion I lacked courage to enter, although my curiosity was strongly aroused. I tried to see what was inside, but the glass door leading into the shop was veiled by a long green curtain.

The following day I passed that way again, intentionally but at a different hour. The door was still closed, the show windows were still empty. I walked up and down for a time, hoping to see some one enter or leave the mysterious shop. No one appeared. A little further on there was a shop where Oriental rugs were for sale and an aged Jew, reminiscent of those Rembrandt painted, was smoking in the doorway.

I pretended to examine some of the rugs that were on view and presently, with an air of indifference, I



#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

inquired of the merchant what sort of goods his neighbor, Ben-Chusai, sold. My question caused the old man to stare at me with wide-open eyes (until that moment they had been hidden behind thick lashes) and he stretched two puffy hands heavenwards like a prophet calling down a curse. A single word several times repeated issued from amongst the jutelike strands of his flowing beard. It sounded like, "Sacrilege! Sacrilege!"

I repeated my question, whereupon the old fellow promptly turned his back on me and vanished within the labyrinth of piled-up rugs.

A few days later I visited the same street a third time, determined to rid myself of my obsession. I turned the handle of the door and finally entered the shop. I found myself alone in a square room without counter or chairs but containing two large presses of some dark wood, which were tightly closed. While I was looking about me in astonishment, doubtful whether to call out or not, a velvet portière on the right was pulled aside to admit a young man of swarthy complexion. He was well dressed, clean-shaven, and smiling, and in other surroundings I might have taken him for the secretary of a large hotel or an embassy. Only his eyes, black, liquid, and restless, and his dark skin with a glint of gold in it, suggested remote Oriental ancestry. He displayed no astonishment at seeing me there.

"Are you an amateur?" he inquired, with a white-enamel smile.

I nodded without knowing what it was all about, whereupon the genial young person escorted me behind the portière, smiling the while with friendly under-

#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

standing. We ascended a handsome stair, well waxed and polished. When we reached the top everything became clear to me.

"You know, of course," the polite Ben-Chusai began in a pleasant voice, "that my shop is the only one in the world for the sale of these . . . let us call them special curiosities. You will find here everything you can wish for—rare pieces and ordinary articles. Everything is genuine, guaranteed, and cheap. There are but few, alas! who appreciate my article. . . ."

Ben-Chusai's "article" was indeed something very special in its line, and I immediately felt myself in my right element.

"This show case," the amiable tradesman explained, "contains only small objects of slight importance that find a ready sale—simple little souvenirs for the amateur of limited means. There are cigar holders made from finger bones, incisors set in gold or platinum, penholders and necklaces of carved vertebrae. Of course the raw material is exclusively human. It is against our principles to use the bones of animals. But this is only the simplest form of our art.

"You may be more interested in these specimens of petrification," he added, pointing to another show case. "They have been obtained by the method of the Italian Segato. We have the lovely hand of a young girl, both feet of a negro ballerina, and the right ear of a celebrated Bohemian violinist. As you see, the flesh has lost something of its natural color, still, the illusion is perfect. With this little hand that was once so soft and caressing you could now smash your enemy's skull.

"I perceive, however, that you are not very much



#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

interested in these objects. You are quite right. I have some finer articles. Here, for example, are two most artistic banquet-cups made from a couple of skulls, and similar to those Alboin was in the habit of using. Here is a marvelous flute cleverly fashioned out of the thigh bone of a woman who was famous for her beauty. We also keep skulls made into elegant *cache-pots* or fruit dishes, and walking-sticks that were once the shin bones of giants. If you only knew how difficult it is and how much it costs to obtain the material for these works of art!"

He opened a press with glass doors that stood in one corner. It contained three rows of glass jars. "These may perhaps prove worthy of your attention," he said. "That large bottle on the top shelf contains the head of a Dayak from Borneo, preserved in alcohol. A Dutch explorer brought it home. Observe the tattoos and the horrible expression of the face. As you probably know, these savages are head-hunters."

A face, in fact, was staring out at me through the yellow liquid—a face crushed against the glass, bloated, frightful, covered with hieroglyphics and short hairs, its wrinkled lids half open.

"Next to this is another curiosity," Ben-Chusai went on, "a foetus with two heads and four arms." This was a mere loathsome tangle of livid and unrecognizable members.

"Below please observe the jar on the right. It contains the head of a girl who was a 'beauty queen' at Palm Beach a year before the war. Very well preserved,

#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

this. We change the alcohol every week. An exceptional piece."

Hair that had once been fair covered a small head that must once have received innumerable kisses. The eyes were closed, the cheeks were of a greenish hue, and the mouth was nearly black. Through the glass two rows of teeth showed like small and rather dirty pebbles.

"To this is that beauty reduced which once batted on man!" Ben-Chusai philosophized. "But let us go on to something else. Look at those pictures hanging over yonder. They are the chest and abdominal coverings of tattooed individuals, which were of course carefully tanned before being framed. Observe the beauty of the designs and the originality of the coloring. The landscape on the left is especially attractive—the trees, the moon, the castle—nothing has been omitted. And the third on the right—tattoos on a Tunisian fisherman. Africa surmounted by three dolphins, a dagger, and a woman's profile. If you would like to have it, the price is only four hundred florins.

"Those large bunches of hair you see hanging over there are a collection of scalps found in an Indian village. All long hair and undamaged, the scalps having been carefully dried. Attractive, these, as drawing-room ornaments.

"This shelf, you perceive, holds only books—all, of course, treating of our branch of trade. I have a good collection of *Death-Dances*, first and very rare editions, beginning with that printed by Guy Marchant in Paris, 1485. Open that album, for it is a masterpiece. These are the *Images mortis* by Holbein the Younger,



BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

of the year 1526. Splendid drawings. Copy in excellent condition.

"This is Leloyer's *Histoire des spectres*, 1605—and this is Decker's *Spectrology*, which is much sought after. A rare edition published in Hamburg in 1690. We also have all the works on the resurrectionists or violators of tombs, and on embalming, from the Egyptians down to the schools of Hunter, Ruysch, and Gorini. But here is the gem of my collection! These ancient tomes bound in human hide! You may be aware that there was a tannery for human hides at Meudon during the French Revolution. Today that industry still exists in Germany, in a languishing condition. Note the fineness of the grain and the delicacy of the tracings. This leather will last as long as calfskin. I should like to sell you this precious edition of *Crimes d'amour* by the Marquis de Sade—himself a necrophile—bound in the beautiful skin of a mulatto girl who was killed in London for reasons of jealousy. Only existing copy. Price twelve hundred florins."

Seeing that I was simply admiring without any intention of purchasing, Ben-Chusai opened a small iron door in the right wall of the big room and politely invited me to enter.

"This is the department of . . . let us call them 'profane' relics. Here we have a small collection of mummies recently arrived from Egypt. All genuine goods certified by Egyptologists. The finest is that of Tetu-nu, a great dignitary of the time of Amenophis IV. That of a matron in a double painted case, is also interesting. The paintings represent scenes of private life in a great Egyptian household—the black slaves

BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

going forth to draw water, the maidservants spinning, the cook plucking a fowl, caldrons set in a row, wine jugs, cats being chased by tame monkeys.

"These dried and shrunken bodies contained in bags of matting are mummies from Peru, of pre-Columbian days. Observe the pieces of muscle and bits of tendon still clinging to the bones, and those locks of hair that appear to be vitrified. I keep these mummies to complete the collection, but they are not particularly picturesque. That bust on top of the shelves is more attractive."

This was a skull on which a voluminous black wig had been placed and which had been painted red about the jaws. The teeth were all of gold. The eye sockets were hidden by a pair of blue spectacles. The thing was horrible, loathsome, monstrous!

"Perhaps I can tempt you with these historical relics," Ben-Chusai resumed. "Here are three finger bones found in the tomb of the Scipios; this is a lock of Madame du Barry's hair; this the hip bone of the Empress Catherine of Russia, and this a pinch of Shelley's ashes. That round box contains the mummified heart of Madame Ackermann, the great atheist poet; in that small ivory box is the ball that killed Pushkin, and in that open case is the beard of Moses Mendelssohn, the great philosopher of Dessau who was the adversary of Kant. That shapeless statuette under glass is the rarest piece of all—a carbonized child from the excavations at Herculaneum. There is nothing more to be seen here, so we will go on to the hall of skeletons."

Ben-Chusai opened another door and I beheld a



#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

spectacle I shall never forget. In a hall longer than it was broad a regiment of skeletons arranged four by four like soldiers stared at us out of innumerable empty sockets. The white regiment of death! They were of all shapes and sizes, giants, dwarfs, heavy, delicate, majestic, and drooping; some deformed by swellings and enlargements or defiled by dust and earth; others of an unnatural whiteness, precise, and as well proportioned as if they were the work of a professor of osteology. There was the skeleton of a child and that of a hunchback; one skeleton lacked both arms; one skull still retained a few locks of faded and sinister-looking hair; another had two holes in its temples. This was the skull of a man who had been murdered.

"The only one of these skeletons that has a history," Ben-Chusai explained, "is the first on the right of the last row. It was sold to me by a German painter who wept bitterly at parting with it. He told me it was the skeleton of a friend of his youth. They were both very poor and were traveling on foot in the Alps when they were caught in a snowstorm, and the only place of refuge they could find was a half-ruined hut. For greater warmth they spent the night tightly clasped in each other's arms. When morning came one of them was dead. The survivor had his beloved friend's skeleton prepared and kept it always with him for more than thirty years, taking it along whenever he moved or went on a journey. After the war poverty obliged him to sell everything he possessed—books, pictures, and the poor relic of his great affection. But of course all this does not raise the commercial value of the object, and I can let you have it for fifty florins."

#### BEN-CHUSAI'S SHOP

The gruesome squad of motionless skeletons seemed to be awaiting an order, a roll call, perhaps the clamor of the Resurrection. Some looked thoughtful, their skulls hanging slightly forward; others stuck out hard-set jaws as though dreaming of vengeance for their own death; one held an enormous hand outstretched, a hand held together by silver wires, as if he were asking the living for alms in all the misery of his complete nakedness.

"There is only one thing I cannot show you," the polite Ben-Chusai murmured softly, "and it is a pity, for it is perhaps the finest article my shop contains. The only thing of its sort in the world, or at least, known to the trade. Do you see that iron-bound box near the window? It holds a ghost, so the former owner assured me, a female ghost with its jewels, clothes, and all the rest. Should I open the box you would see nothing but a sort of badly moth-eaten, moss-colored cloak, because the ghost is not always there. But there is also the risk of actually seeing her, or worse still, the danger that she might escape and vanish. At night, however, most unearthly creakings and groanings are heard in this room. I need only tell you that my ghost comes from a place of great historic interest—from Newstead Abbey, Byron's famous castle. I could not sell it for less than four thousand florins, but I do not think it is expensive at that price, considering its origin."

When I finally got away from Ben-Chusai's shop everything looked to me new, luminous, and wonderful. Every living being I met was a friend, every smile seemed a greeting, the sound of every voice was comforting. But a couple of days ago I went back and



bought goods to the amount of ten thousand florins. Two months hence, in America, I shall have a new collection—the richest Thanatotheca in the United States. Ben-Chusai, greatly impressed by my enthusiasm and the size of my order, allowed me a discount of fifteen per cent on the sum total of his bill.

#### PAPER



#### PAPER

*Leipzig, September 15*

WHILE visiting a press exhibition today it suddenly struck me that our whole civilization, at least in its most delicate and essential elements, rests upon the most fragile thing that exists—upon paper.

I reflected that the world's credit consists of hundreds of millions of banknotes, bills of exchange, and checks that are nothing but narrow strips of paper. I further reflected that the industrial holdings of the different continents consist of hundreds of millions of shares, certificates, and bonds, which are all merely scraps of paper. Lawyers' and notaries' offices are full of documents and contracts on which depend the lives of millions and millions of men, and these also are but thin sheets of rather dirty paper. The city registers, the archives of all the different state departments, are but piles of yellowing paper. Public and private libraries are merely collections of printed pages.

#### PAPER

In public offices, the army, schools, academies, and parliaments everything is done by means of scraps of paper—circulars, permits, receipts, votes, bills for laws, letters, reports, papers covered with writing, paper written on by the typewriter, printed paper. Both newspapers and water-closets consume tons of paper every year.

The primary substance of modern life is neither petroleum, iron, coal, nor rubber—it is paper. Every day entire forests are falling beneath the ax to provide enormous quantities of a substance that has neither the durability nor the hardness of wood. Should the paper mills stop running, civilization would be paralyzed.

In olden times money was all of metal, documents were either written on parchment or actually engraved on marble or bronze, and the books of the Assyrians and Babylonians were written on bricks. Today nothing strong or lasting is used; the property and rights of humanity and the treasures of science and of art are entrusted to a little wood-pulp and glue, to a substance subject to deterioration and strongly inflammable. Dampness, fire, moths, ants, and rats may disperse and destroy this enormous mass of paper on which rests all we hold most precious in this world.

Is this the symbol of a civilization that recognizes its own evanescence, or is it merely careless imbecility?



## THE ANIMALIZATOR

TWO or three days ago, although I was suffering from one of my frequent bilious attacks, a massive old gentleman whose name, it appears, is Sarmihiel succeeded in forcing his way into my presence.

I saw before me a broad, heavy-jawed countenance that might have been that of an ox-driver, which was softened, however, by a pair of big, almost white, and dreamy eyes. He offered me a solid hand that might have belonged to Goliath, and announced that he needed my help in an undertaking on which depended the future happiness of mankind. I answered at once that I cared not at all for either man or his happiness, and that he would do well to save his time and his breath. But Sarmihiel would not be put off.

"When you have formed an idea of my system," he protested, "you will certainly change your mind. It will not cost you anything to hear me. I do not ask for charity but for understanding."

Out of pure curiosity and perhaps also because at the moment I was too weak to rebel, I prepared to listen to him.

"No doubt you are acquainted," the old fellow began, "with Frederick the Great's famous saying, '*L'homme est un animal dépravé*.' A profound truth that can be verified any day. All his misfortunes, all the wickedness and the sorrows of mankind, are the result of his own depravity, that is, of his having renounced his true

## THE ANIMALIZATOR

destiny and done violence to his original nature. Man is an animal, nothing but an animal, but with a perverseness unique in the brute kingdom, he has determined to become something more. He has been guilty of treason, of treason against animalism. And for this misdeed he has been punished. He has failed to become an angel and he has forfeited the innocent beatitude of the beast. The consequence is that he has remained suspended in mid-air, that he is tortured, troubled, diseased, perturbed, dissatisfied. His only salvation lies in a reversion to his origin, in a complete restoration of his true nature, in becoming an animal again. All great thinkers, from Lucian to Leopardi, have recognized that the animals are incomparably happier and more perfect than man, but up to the present no one has thought of seeking a rational and sure means of obtaining reconjunction with our brothers. We must get back to the lost Paradise, and I would remind you that Eden was but a vast zoölogical garden. The Paradise to be reconquered is that of the fauna.

"Homer already had a vision of this. Circe, who transformed the companions of Ulysses into swine, is the beneficent sorceress whose first disciple, at a distance of so many centuries, I have the honor to be. But Ulysses, who stands for cunning or for the intelligence that corrupts, and who enjoyed the protection of Minerva, herself jealous of man's happiness, succeeded in restoring them to the human state, in other words, to their chastisement. How, later on, he was punished for this crime, you can read for yourself in the *Odyssey*."

"I grasp the trend of your reasoning," I put in at



#### THE ANIMALIZATOR

this point. "Not being an unintelligent animal, I understand perfectly. But as yet I do not see . . ."

"Have a little patience," Sarmihiel replied. "You are the first person who has ever listened to me for more than two minutes and you will surely allow an old man to unburden himself for once in his life. I am a prophet repulsed, like Zarathustra, but my ideal is the opposite of his. He was the herald of human exaltation—I am the herald of recession to the animal. But we both agree in holding that man's present state (a sad and cowardly compromise between the ape and the superman) is absurd and unbearable. It is clear that we cannot become supermen, therefore we can only recede and again become apes.

"This idea was timidly approached by a Swiss masochist of the eighteenth century. But Rousseau did preach a return to the savage life. That would certainly be a step in the right direction, but we must not forget that the savages are still too much like men and not enough like animals. My system is a more radical one, but certain experiments are still necessary and in this connection I have thought of you."

"Of me? And what do you expect me to do about it?"

"Only this. Let me have, for a few years, the great desert tract you own in the Allegheny Mountains, and advance me a certain sum for initial expenses. I would take three human couples out there, chosen from amongst the most destitute, who have neither roof nor calling, and on them I would try my system. It consists in accustoming our species gradually to the conditions of life of non-domestic animals.

"In the first place, no clothes, no cutting of hair,

#### THE ANIMALIZATOR

beard, or nails. The erect position would be forbidden, and the subjects must learn to go on all fours. They would not be allowed to use speech or any human language; they must communicate with me and with each other by means of gestures, bellowings, or howls. There would be no instrument, machine, or made object in the experimental area. The subjects must gradually adapt themselves to living on fruit, roots, or raw meat. Of course there would be no houses or even sheds; I would have them sleep in caves or among the branches of trees. They would be allowed to hunt, but without weapons, and to fight among themselves with tooth and nail. There would be no law, no moral teachings, no religion. Free beasts under a free sky!

"I am convinced that if they can be kept under strict supervision, a few years would suffice to obtain the complete animalization of these creatures, and thus insure their perfect happiness. All that torments and worries man, the degenerate and corrupt animal, would disappear as by enchantment, and my pupils would slowly but surely reacquire the placid irresponsibility of their ancient forbears. Should this first experiment prove satisfactory, as I trust it will, we could start the propaganda for the total animalization of mankind, and this with every hope of success. Objections and reactions would have to be faced, and doubtless also violent opposition, especially on the part of the so-called intellectuals, the most nefarious microorganisms of our species. But I am convinced that the majority of mankind, be they rich or poor, would become rapidly converted to an idea that appeals to their most deeply rooted and secret instincts.



#### THE ANIMALIZATOR

"Notwithstanding all the efforts of pedagogues to distort his natural and original animal nature by means of the many drugs and incantations of literature, philosophy, and religion, man still holds fast to his inclination towards the animal state, and whenever he gets the chance he is only too glad to inebriate himself, if only for a few hours or a few minutes, with the purely sensual pleasures of the brute. Men may be depraved and faithless animals, but they have not reached the point of entirely abandoning their original nature. As soon as my message, backed by experiment, is delivered to them, their wild-animal and simian instincts will be awakened and they will rally around me as their savior. I shall become the Messiah of animalism regained. Man, false, descended from the beasts, has played his parents kind, I shall lead these faithless children back to their true families and restore to all their lost happiness. If religion were tolerated in the new kingdom, they would worship me as a divinity."

"But wait a minute!" I cried. "You yourself strike me as too intelligent and altruistic to wish to become a beast. Is that why you do not begin experimenting on yourself, if you really believe that this animalism is the perfect state?"

"You have missed my meaning," the colossal old man replied sadly. "Like all redeemers, I must sacrifice myself for the happiness of others. Like Moses, I may view the Promised Land, but I may not enter it. Were this otherwise, who would direct the vast operations of this movement of anti-domestication that I am setting afoot? Who would spread the gospel of salvation? I am the opposite of the tamer—I must turn the domesticated

#### RAMON AND THE MINERALS

into savages. But as the tamer must at times become cruel if he would overcome the cruel, so am I condemned to remain intelligent that I may suppress intelligence. Have I made my meaning clear to you at last?"

To get rid of him I had to promise that I would give the matter my attention and let him have an answer in a week's time. And then Sarmihel the animalizator, having fixed me for a last time with his great colorless eyes, stalked solemnly away.



#### RAMON AND THE MINERALS

Madrid, October 18

I AM frightfully bored here, but I must stay on.

"Who is there worth knowing in Madrid?" I inquired of the hotel secretary.

"Only two persons—Primo and Ramon," was his answer.

"Which would you recommend?"

"That depends. All the bores go to see Primo; the people who are themselves bored go to see Ramon. One is besieged by reporters and people of the best families, and the other by loafers and lunatics. You can take your choice."

"I choose Ramon."

I found him one night at the famous Pombo Café, surrounded by seven dark-complexioned youths smok-



#### RAMON AND THE MINERALS

ing cigarettes and listening to the master of the *greguerias* with rapt attention. Ramon Gomez de la Serna is a swarthy-skinned, corpulent gentleman who never appears to be taking himself seriously. As I had been told he was very affable, I did not hesitate to introduce myself.

"You are an American," Ramon stated solemnly. "Have you never observed that your continent is composed of two triangles, held apart by their corners? America is a double Masonic symbol stretched between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Until recently the two triangles were united by an umbilical cord divided into four republics. You have now severed this cord, and are already beginning to feel the dangerous consequences. With your accustomed ingenuousness you believed that oceans had no personality. Yet when the waters that lap the shores of China met those that lap the shores of France, there were serious results. The Panama Canal was opened in 1913, and in 1914 the World War broke out. The United States, who were responsible for that fatal cut, were forced to do something they had never done before—to send an army to Europe. And now they are being punished. They have grown fabulously rich, which means that they are less free and more envied than ever. Let no man meddle with matter, for matter will be revenged!

"I have recently been giving my attention to the works of Jagadis Chandra Bose. Of course you know who Bose is—India's greatest scientist and one of the leading biologists of our day. He has made a far-reaching discovery, namely, that both plants and minerals have souls. Of plants as much was already sur-

#### RAMON AND THE MINERALS

misled, for magic plants, murderous trees, amorous flowers, and talking leaves were already known to mythology. As for minerals, no one has ever suspected that they possessed sensibility and a will like our own. Now my own modest experience confirms Bose's discovery.

"It is no new thing for me to study the souls of inanimate objects. For years I have known certain brass taps that cough and groan in a most distressing manner in consequence of their enforced and continuous association with water. I have seen the shoe on a mule's hoof shiver violently on coming in contact with a dirty brick or a filthy heap of manure. Among my acquaintances are certain old keys that have become pleasantly familiar with me and refuse to unlock when, by coming home earlier than usual, I am unfaithful to my nocturnal habit. Have you never observed the idiosyncrasies of your watch case? Try using it as a looking-glass. On certain days it will send back your image flattered into that of a hero, while at another moment it will distort you most maliciously, rendering you unrecognizable and grotesque.

"We are frightfully inconsiderate in our treatment of minerals. Not only do we drag them forth from the earth, their natural abiding-place, but we treat them with unheard-of and revolting cruelty. Do you think iron enjoys being forced to melt and even liquefy in a furnace? Do you believe that stone and marble, after having been brutally torn from the mountain's side, are glad to be made into stupidly geometrical shapes and forced to emigrate to cities to be used in concealing our various domestic ignominies from the public gaze? The weight of trains subjects the iron in rails to continuous



#### RAMON AND THE MINERALS

and heavy pressure. When iron becomes rusty, we say it is the effect of exposure to air, but may not rust be the visible expression of the iron's sense of outrage? In consequence of much handling by man silver has assumed the dull pallor of the consumptive, and gold, since its incarceration in the vaults of banks, has shown signs of madness—and this with good reason, for we have brutally separated it from its celestial brother, the sun.

"I could quote many other examples of the sufferings of metals. I must admit, however, that at times they exhibit a certain amount of conscious will-power and set up opposition. I have known pens of English steel that have refused to write against the government or moral teachings, and only yesterday the trigger of my revolver refused to function, perhaps because it knew that I intended shooting a fine big cat that was disturbing me by its horrid yowling. We had a most singular case right here at the Pombo. One day when a fierce critic of my works happened to drop in, all the spoons he touched slipped through his fingers and fell to the ground, one after the other. Being used to serve only intelligent people, they were simply refusing their services to an enemy of clever thinking." The seven youths were still smoking, admiring and basking.

"What do you propose doing about it, if what you say is true?" I inquired.

"One of these days I will found the League for the Rights of Minerals," Ramon replied. "Just as there are societies for the protection of animals, so there should be for the protection of minerals. Being now certain that, like ourselves, they are capable of

#### RAMON AND THE MINERALS

feeling and suffering, it has become our duty to do what we can to check the persecution of which they are the mute and helpless victims. Our chief endeavor will be to restore minerals to the mines, stones to the quarries, gold to the auriferous rivers, diamonds to the diamond fields. There is no denying that this program will prove unpopular and difficult to carry out. But at least we may be able to found hospitals for sick metals, for gold reduced in consequence of repeated coinings, for diseased iron, and for consumptive silver, and perhaps also some homes for bronze, which has been forced to prostitute itself in the service of monuments, and for copper that has been pounded into coin. Will you not give some of your dollars for the furtherance of this work of mercy?"

"Willingly," said I. "But my faith in the souls of minerals is not yet strong enough to draw the dollars out of my pocket. When I have had time to study Bose's works and am thoroughly convinced, I will send you a check. Meanwhile I would call your attention to the needs of our thirsty throats. May I offer these gentlemen a cocktail?"

My offer was accepted with enthusiasm. Ramon rambled on, discoursing humorously until three in the morning, but I cannot recall any of the other amazing revelations he amused himself with reeling off.



## DUKE HERMOSILLA DE SALVATIERRA

*Burgos, April 13*  
I HAVE discovered a Spaniard who is still more original than Ramon. He has never written anything nor will he ever do so, but I cannot see why no one has ever written anything about him.

I allude to Duke Almagro Hermosilla de Salvatierra, the last descendant of one of old Castile's most illustrious families. I came to Burgos to see the tomb of the Cid Campeador and owe my acquaintance with the duke to this ancient soldier of fortune. I was in the church of San Pedro de Cardeña, standing before the monument that the French general, Thiébauld, caused to be erected here in 1808 to receive the bones of the great enemy of the Moors, when I perceived an old man dressed in black kneeling at the foot of the tomb with his face hidden in his hands, who seemed to be praying. When he finally rose I saw that his face was whiter than the candles on a neighboring altar. He was small of stature but finely proportioned, and a natural dignity of bearing such as one finds only in these parts seemed to increase his height. Seeing that I was interested in the tomb, he paused to observe me and presently addressed me.

"Are you one of those who are faithful to the cult of our Ruy Diaz de Bivar?" he asked.

I explained that I was a foreigner and that I had come here merely because my guidebook recommended a visit. This seemed to disappoint and sadden him some-

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what, but he soon brightened and regained his former composure.

"I am now the only one who remembers the anniversary of his death," he said. "I come here every year to pay my respects to his memory. I am a descendant of one of the Cid's companions in arms, and I hold him in great veneration. Are you aware that Philip II, that greatest of all kings, petitioned Rome for his beatification?"

We left the church together. Duke Hermosilla de Salvatierra knows Burgos better than any archaeologist. To him every stone is alive, is a chapter in history.

"You will not be able to say you have seen Burgos until you have visited my palace," he told me. "I never admit visitors, but as I have found you in front of the Cid's tomb on the very anniversary of his death—may the Lord have him in glory!—I will make an exception in your favor. I shall expect you tomorrow, then, after the siesta hour."

I inquired about the duke at my hotel. They were greatly surprised that he should have spoken to me.

"He never talks with any one," the head waiter told me, "and he seldom comes to Burgos. He is very rich and owns a palace in nearly every city in Spain. Each palace is of special color and is distinguished by some peculiarity. There is the Black Palace at Avila, where all the hangings and furnishings are in mourning and where he usually spends the season of Lent. At Toledo he has the Green Palace, every part of which is covered with green Moorish tiles arranged so that each room represents either a pergola, a grove, or an orchard. At Seville he has a Red Palace, where each apartment is



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adorned with frescos representing the different circles of the *Inferno*. He used to live there when he was a young man with four or five *toreros*. Every one knows his famous Golden Palace at Madrid, which cost one of his ancestors twenty million reales. It is never opened except to receive the king. You will see the Naked Palace here in Burgos, the oldest of his family's homes. What is strange is that a complete staff of servants, from doorkeeper to cook, is kept in each one of his palaces, as if the master always lived there. Each butler has orders to provide dinner and supper every day as if the duke were in residence. At Avila, Toledo, Madrid, Seville, and Burgos, twice daily the table is richly spread and the servants bring in steaming dishes and place them on the table before the ducal chair, which no one occupies. In the evening the candles in all the candelabra are lit and the servants are at their posts in silent attendance on their absent master. The duke is sometimes away from Spain for years at a time, and some of his palaces have seen him only twice since he became head of the family. But his orders are everywhere carried out. Day after day, in the different towns, the cooks prepare the five dinners and the five suppers. If the duke does not arrive—and he hardly ever does—the servants wait an hour and then sit down to what was prepared for their master. These are the caprices of a half-crazy, childless individual who does not know what to do with his money. Furthermore, he will not tolerate any modern inventions in his palaces, where there is neither electric light nor telephone. He will not travel by train or car, but drives everywhere in a great coach drawn by four mules and accompanied by out-

DUKE HERMOSILLA DE SALVATIERRA  
riders. No one wonders at this, for all Spain knows he is mad."

José's account only heightened my curiosity to see the inside of the aged lunatic's den. At three o'clock on the day following, therefore, I lifted the heavy wrought-iron knocker that adorns the great door of the Naked Palace. A servant dressed in the fashion of a long-past age, and who reminded me of certain portraits by Titian, opened the door and conducted me up a stair encompassing a broad patio.

I entered a very long hall, dimly lighted by three windows, and completely bare even of chairs. On either side of one of the doors stood two complete suits of armor, with closed visors. The servant requested me to wait here, and disappeared. Presently the white-faced duke himself was standing beside me, although I had not been aware of his coming.

"I regret that I cannot ask you to sit down," he began, "but this is not my own house. It is the retreat of my ancestors. Please follow me."

He led me to another apartment, which was in almost total darkness and which at first I took to be full of people.

"Do not be alarmed," the duke whispered. "There is really no one here." But as he spoke he crossed himself.

I looked about me. There were eight or ten figures in sight—men and women dressed in the strange fashions one sees only in the operas of Verdi and Meyerbeer. The men wore breastplates and leg guards, and stood in challenging attitudes; the women, half smothered in their draperies and skirts of brocade, were seated



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on thronelike chairs with high backs. Their faces, which were uncovered, were of the color and ghastly stolidity of those of wax figures.

"This idea originated with one of my fifteenth-century ancestors," the duke explained. "The family must not forget any of its members. Their tombs, scattered about in different churches, hide our dead from sight; the portraits of them that exist are not sufficiently life-like. Ever since the time of Gomez IV in 1423, a wax mask has been made of every one who has died, and a figure of his exact proportions has been dressed in the clothes he wore during his last days. In a word, a double of each one of my ancestors has been created, resembling the original as closely as possible. For five centuries our family has remained united, at least in space, although separated by time. One alone is missing—Sanchez VII, who spent most of his life in Paris in the eighteenth century and who wished, *afrancesado* that he was, to escape from the control of his ancestors."

We went on into another room and then into one beyond that. As we advanced the costumes changed, but in the faces a likeness to the first models we had seen could always be detected. There were Spanish grandees clad in somber black with heavy gold chains around their necks; Carmelite abbesses clasping rosaries of precious stones in their gloved hands; emaciated children, their pale faces showing above lace collars; generals in showy silver-braided uniforms, leaning on the chiseled hilts of great dress-swords; plump maidens, their bodies emerging from billowing skirts of rich red silk embroidered with pearls; there were old men, bent and shrunken, in heavy fur cloaks. In the last hall the

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first tall hats, romantic-looking cloaks, and flaring trousers appeared, and here the ladies seemed to be seated on their enormous bell-shaped crinolines.

"No other family in the world has had this idea," the duke informed me. "The Salvatierras are the first not only in war but also in the cult of the dead. I am never alone. I have only to come back to these rooms and I am at once surrounded by my own people, even by those relatives I have never known. Other families have to put up with miniatures, which may get lost, or with portraits, which crack and grow dim, but here you find true copies of life. Within these walls we are surrounded by five hundred years of life preserved and made visible."

To tell the truth, many of those livid masks were all the more terrifying because they had become deformed by time and heat. Certain crooked mouths seemed to be grinning behind the duke's back; glass eyes peering from beneath moth-eaten locks had taken on a squint through staring for centuries at nothing. Several noses had disappeared, a few ears had melted or fallen off. The clothes, almost all of the finest stuffs, were covered with dust and eaten by moths. To all this, however, the duke appeared oblivious, as from time to time he paused before one or other of the images.

"This gentleman was Grand Inquisitor of Spain in 1625. Seven thousand were condemned by him, more than a thousand of whom were burned. This one was a commander of the order of Sant' Iago, a friend of the famous Tenorio. He was killed in a duel. This nun was acquainted with the celebrated Calderon de la Barca and before taking the veil wrote *autos sacra-*



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*mentales*. . . . This nobleman was governor of Peru;  
historians who, alas! are frequently malicious, have ac-  
cused him of being bloodthirsty, but that is pure slan-  
der. On a certain occasion he found himself obliged  
to suppress a revolt against the king and it was not his  
fault, but that of the tribunals, if more than three  
thousand rebels suffered death. . . ."

By this time I had ceased to listen to him. These false  
representations of life, more fearsome than corpses, that  
pressed around me, that I could not avoid touching in  
passing, so numerous were they, had ended by filling  
me not with terror, but with a sort of stifling nausea  
that seemed to take my breath away. The windows were  
all closed, the light was dim, and a mixed odor of  
camphor, stuffiness, and decaying history floated in the  
air.

"Only one thing troubles me," the duke said, escort-  
ing me back to the anteroom. "I am the last of my line.  
Who will take the trouble to place me among my ances-  
tors? And after my death, what will become of these  
venerable images of the members of one of the oldest  
of Castilian families? Will they be allowed to remain  
forever in this palace, alone and neglected? Or will  
some plebeian revolution, some barbaric invasion, fling  
upon the dust heap this assembly of noble beings, who  
for five centuries were among the world's masters?"

Just then I caught sight of the stairway and saw the  
light shining in the patio; I scented fresh air and beheld  
a patch of blue sky, and after hastily thanking the  
Duke Almagro Hermosilla de Salvatierra, I almost ran  
out of the palace. I am glad to have known him and to

THE RETURN OF PYTHAGORAS  
have visited his domestic necropolis, but I have decided  
to leave Burgos this very evening.



### THE RETURN OF PYTHAGORAS

*Athens, April 10*

I HAVE been here a week and am beginning to be  
bored. The Parthenon is not bad, but all the other ruins  
are of an inferior sort. Athens would be far finer, in-  
deed, if they had not built a big modern village in  
close proximity to the ancient remains, a village devoid  
of individuality that has usurped the old and glorious  
name.

I should have gone away in a state of still greater  
disappointment had I not happened to meet here one  
of the most astonishing of living men. I had an intro-  
duction to a young Hellenist who is studying at the  
American School of Archaeology and who has proved  
a most valuable guide. A couple of evenings ago I was  
walking, alone and half asleep, along the road that  
leads to the Cephissus, when Dr. Begg suddenly rushed  
past me. He did not see me, but I called out to him and  
hastened to overtake him.

"Where are you off to so fast?" I inquired.

At the moment he seemed to be somewhat embarrassed  
and to be inwardly cursing our meeting, but presently  
he smiled and said:



#### THE RETURN OF PYTHAGORAS

"I have an appointment with a man of the fifth century before Christ, and you will understand that I cannot keep a person waiting who comes from so far." I naturally concluded he was merely joking and trying to put me off with a laugh. "A man of the fifth century?" I queried.

"If you don't believe me, come with me," Dr. Begg rejoined, "and I will introduce you to him. Probably he will like having a second visitor. But we must make haste."

We had another half-mile to go, and on the way Dr. Begg explained the mystery. The man we were going to see, he told me, was really called Michael Angelopoulos and did not look more than half a century old, but for some time he had been passing himself off as Pythagoras resuscitated and alive, and Pythagoras certain of his disciples, both Greek and foreign, believed him to be.

"He has promised to give me the proofs of his reincarnation this very night," said Dr. Begg, "and I am curious to see what he will contrive."

We soon reached a sort of rustic cottage with an inscription in Greek on the door. I asked my companion what it meant.

"That is one of the 'golden sayings' attributed to Pythagoras," he replied, "and it means: 'Never display the entrails outside the temple.'"

We were ushered in by a manservant who was black of skin, hair, and finger nails, and found ourselves in a room with a sort of curtained alcove at one end. I expected to see Pythagoras appear as soon as we were alone, but to my surprise Dr. Begg went up to the cur-

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tain and announced his arrival, adding that he had brought a friend and explaining briefly who I was. Hereupon a guttural voice began speaking behind the curtain.

"Let the chrysocrat of the New Atlantis be admitted among the acousmatics."

"The philosopher says that the rich American is to be admitted among the auditors," Dr. Begg interpreted in a whisper.

"Mr. Angelopoulos," he said aloud, "do you remember why you asked me to come here tonight?"

"Do you suppose that a man who remembers words spoken four and twenty centuries ago will forget those uttered but four and twenty hours since? You are probably aware that in one of my first incarnations I always addressed my disciples from behind a curtain, nor will I now alter my custom, although indeed the times themselves are sadly changed. To overcome your doubts, however, I will show you a part of my body. Do you remember in what the visible sign of my half-human, half-divine nature consisted?"

"I know," my guide answered solemnly. "Diogenes Laertius mentions it, I believe. The true Pythagoras had a golden thigh."

Hardly had these words left his lips when a corner of the curtain was raised and a naked leg appeared. We drew nearer. Above the knee the leg was yellow and glittered. Had it been gilded or perhaps covered with a thin sheet of gold? We were not given time to find out, for after a second or two the leg was withdrawn behind the curtain.

"Are you convinced?" the invisible philosopher in-



#### THE RETURN OF PYTHAGORAS

quired. My companion looked at me and smiled but refrained from answering. "After all, what is there that is strange about my resurrection?" the voice went on. "History has told you that before I was Pythagoras I was Aethalides, Euphorbus, and Pyrrhus. And although the body called Pythagoras did actually turn cold in the year 496 B.C., I have since returned many times to earth in different bodies and under different names. Today I am registered as Angelopulos, but in reality I am always the same. All souls transmigrate and re-turn, but I alone, thanks to the divine element in me that raises me above mankind, am privileged to remember past states, and to remain conscious of my own identity throughout my different incarnations.

"I must acknowledge that never have I experienced as much satisfaction in a return as in this present one. You will recall that my system was founded on numbers and that for me all things can be reduced to numbers. Today at last the world recognizes that I am right, although my theory may not be acknowledged. I have traveled in many countries, as I did on a previous occasion, and everywhere I have read and heard only of numbers. Every science is now reduced to numerical formulae, and there are complete sciences, like astronomy and statistics, that consist of nothing but numbers. Visit any one of the innumerable business centers with which the earth's surface is thickly dotted, and which you call offices, countinghouses, treasuries, exchanges, or banks, and you will find nothing but numbers filling huge volumes and hear no talk of anything but numbers. Every soldier has his number, every prisoner is known by a number, the inhabitants of great cities

#### THE RETURN OF PYTHAGORAS

figure in the records by their telephone numbers. In that new temple known as the stock exchange all the shouting concerns numbers, and instead of extolling their deeds of glory the nations vie in proudly comparing the number of their subjects, of the square miles they own, of their imports and exports. Through the streets rush shrieking vehicles, each one showing a number for purposes of identification; and in the air flying machines carry their numbers up into the clouds. In the country of your birth, with which I am also acquainted, I have heard men judged and valued by means of numbers—this one is worth three millions, that other is worth only eight hundred thousand. This then, is the century of the triumphant and ubiquitous numeral, the century that of all others is Pythagorean.

"There is yet another reason why it may be so termed. As of course you know, I founded at Croton a brotherhood of ascetics, an association of a twofold character, for it was both mystical and political. My community was attacked and dispersed after my death because the Greek temperament could not tolerate the subordination of individuals to a principle and a discipline. Today my system triumphs. I have lived in many centuries, but in no one have I witnessed such a flowering of associations, and in no other epoch has the individual been so completely subject to the control of the group to which he belongs. Nowhere will you find a man who does not belong to a sect, a fraternity, a party, a league, an army, an academy, a religious order, a syndicate, or to some society either public or secret. Monastic orders, convents, Masonic, theosophic, or occultistic lodges, corporations and federations,



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brotherhoods and associations, clans and trade unions—the whole of the human species, from the savage to the most highly civilized, either belongs to a syndicate or is closely connected with a union. My dream, which twenty-four centuries ago was premature, today has become a world-wide reality. The individual no longer exists save in theory; in practice each man is no longer a wheel, a number, an associate.

“Consider these two orders of facts, which are to be met with all over the world—the triumph of the numeral and of solidarity—and you will have to admit with me that no epoch can boast as truly as can the present of having conformed to my ancient doctrine. Nor has there ever been a more suitable time for my thirtieth incarnation.” Here the voice died away.

“Yet today, O divine Pythagoras,” Dr. Begg observed, “no one scruples to indulge in meat and beans.”

“Insignificant details! Stuff and nonsense!” the invisible philosopher replied indignantly. “New times, new ways! I am ready to compromise on all details if only the essential principles of my philosophy be respected and applied as they are today.”

We took a ceremonious leave of the curtain and of the man with the golden thigh, but once outside we laughed all the way back to Athens. It was the first pleasant evening I had spent since landing at the Piraeus.

## A HUNDRED HEARTS

*Concord, March*

MY PRESENT of three hundred thousand dollars to the University of W. has given me the right to visit the laboratories whenever I like. The most perfect, so the trustees say, is that of physiology, under the directorship of the famous Fruhestadt, an Americanized German. When I visited this laboratory they were making important experiments on the autonomic action of the heart. An Italian physiologist had already succeeded in keeping alive for many days the heart he had taken from a frog and preserved in a saline solution. Professor Fruhestadt was now trying to find out whether this could be done with the hearts of other animals. The pig had given the most satisfactory results, and I was able, indeed, to inspect two pigs' hearts, immersed in a practically clear liquid, which were beating regularly almost as if they were alive.

“Mark one strange point,” the assistant who was accompanying me said with a smile. “The heart of the pig is that most closely resembling the heart of man, both as regards shape and dimensions. And we do not despair of being able to try the experiment on one of our own species if we can only obtain the necessary permission.”

On thinking over what the assistant had said, I remembered my collection of giants and the problem that has been worrying me—how to make a collection



# A HUNDRED HEARTS

of living beings who would not run away—appeared suddenly to have found a solution.

I proposed my plan to Professor Fruhestadt's assistant. Within a month, at one hundred dollars each he was to furnish the collection I desired. He has succeeded. Three hundred and seventy pigs have been sacrificed, and of course sold at the normal price, and I now have here, housed in a cheerful gallery in my Concord cottage, one of the most unusual collections in the world.

Along both walls, on pine shelves, stand one hundred glass jars, in each one of which there beats a dark-red heart. Immersed in the solution, which maintains their vitality and which the assistant replenishes every day, the hundred hearts contract and expand with a somewhat weary and irregular but continuous action. One hundred motors of flesh, working in space and separated from the apparatus that set them going.

This eternal cardiac throbbing going on without rhyme or reason, attracts me strongly, and arouses strange thoughts. I like to imagine, when I observe the similarity, that I have before me one hundred human hearts, one hundred hearts that once sped the blood through one hundred warm and living bodies, the paralysis of fear and the quickening of passion. They alone now preserve a semblance of life; they are freed from the creatures they served; they palpitate gratuitously, to no purpose, for no one—only to amuse me, who have never been able to abide the gushing sentimentality of poets and romance writers on the subject of the heart!

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# SWIMMING IN GOLD

This ideal symbol of all sentimental imbecility, of all pathetic outpourings—here it is, reduced to its mechanical reality, within ugly glass jars. The bodies in which these hearts belonged are dead, the spirits have flown, and yet these dark pear-shaped organs go stupidly on beating under glass as if something fine and beautiful still responded to their throbbing.



# SWIMMING IN GOLD<sup>1</sup>

*New Parthenon, September 18*

IN BOOKS and newspapers I am constantly coming across certain stupid expressions that annoy me greatly. For instance, "swimming in gold" or "reveling in gold." Such expressions are the inventions of weak minds devoid of imagination.

I am one of the richest men in the world, but I have never swum in gold. As a matter of fact I have seen very little gold, and only rarely do I use it. I carry no gold about with me, and I hardly ever pay with gold coins, which are in use only in half-civilized and untrustworthy countries. Gold is generally seen on common people and indeed there is something vulgar about it.

A few days ago, however, having been more than usually annoyed by these phrases, I determined to make

<sup>1</sup> The Italian equivalent of "rolling in riches."—Translator.

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## SWIMMING IN GOLD

the experiment and try what fools call "swimming in gold." I ordered my chief treasurer (an Armenian who never sleeps) to get together as much gold as he could, both coins and objects made of the precious metal, and to heap it up in the great porphyry basin in the so-called "Crypt of Tiberius." That night, accompanied only by my treasurer, I descended to the crypt, and having closed all the steel shutters carefully, I undressed. The Armenian declared that the basin, which is nearly twenty-five feet long, contained two millions' worth of gold. There were gold pieces of all times and countries, for I had allowed my collection of coins to be used; there were rings, chains, watches, votive offerings, horns for keeping off the evil eye, medals, old gold teeth, charms and ornaments of all descriptions. Coins predominated, however—a few Roman denarii, Persian darics, Spanish doubloons, Florentine florins, Venetian ducats and zechins, French louis, Dutch crowns, and more modern sovereigns and dollars than anything else.

Presently I tried to plunge into that yellow mass. In the first place, I wish to point out that it is not possible to "swim in gold." The most one can do, using the hands to further the operation, is to worm one's way in, up to the waist, but that is all; to achieve even this demands a great effort, and when one is in one cannot move, but is held a prisoner in a most uncomfortable position.

The sensation one experiences, with half one's body immersed in metal, is extremely unpleasant. In spite of its color, which poets and painters describe as warm, sunny, glowing, and so forth, gold is intensely cold, not to say icy. During the few minutes that I forced

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myself to bear it I felt I was being disagreeably squeezed, while cold shivers ran up and down my spine. It was one of the most unpleasant moments of my life, in which I experienced nothing but a painful sense of pressure, constriction, and cold. Nor can it be said that the sight of gold is pleasing. Its yellow is by no means the loveliest shade of that color to be found in nature. The chinapaya and even the common sunflower are of a deeper, more brilliant hue, to say nothing of some shades of yellow we find in Botticelli and Van Gogh.

There is something about gold that is hostile and impure, be it the cold, lemon-hued gold of the ancients, the dark, debased metal of medieval days, or worse still, the shining red composition of our own times. Gold, moreover, has been so degraded by being put to humiliating purposes—false and glittering teeth, pens stained with ink, spectacle frames, and so forth—that it has become almost loathsome. And as for the coins, handled by filthy hands, swallowed, hidden in the mouth and elsewhere! . . .

As soon as I was out of the so-called bath I ordered my treasurer to sell the sovereigns, dollars, and jewels without delay and to put back in their places the ancient pieces that are valuable as curiosities.

If the rich possessed no other form of pleasure than that fabulous and vulgar one of "swimming in gold," they must be counted the most absurd unfortunates in the world. To swim in gold might perhaps be made a form of severe punishment, to which, for my part, I would like to see bad writers subjected.



## COLLECTING DOUBLES

*New Parthenon, End of November*

I HAVE no luck with my collections. The giants were dispersed, the hearts soon bored me and had to be continually renewed. I had thought of another collection that, besides being something quite new, I believed would prove a real safeguard against melancholy. But this, from which I had hoped so much, has also ended badly.

I have often thought how fortunate were the contemporaries of the men we most highly esteem—the disciples of Socrates, the mariners who accompanied Columbus, Shakespeare's actors, Michelangelo's pupils, the servants of Ivan the Terrible or of Bismarck—and I sometimes envied them. One century alone may be poor in great men, but if we could have the greatest of several centuries united, as for example we have them in Dante or in Fontenelle's *Dialogues des morts*, we might assemble a company to be proud of. To have them as busts or portraits, dead and voiceless, counts for nothing. A member of the S.F.P.R. who was in correspondence with Sir Conan Doyle once said to me, when I told him of this dream of mine, that it would be quite possible to evoke an assembly of superior spirits if I could but procure a sufficient number of first-class mediums. But to tell the truth, I have not much confidence in these messages that are supposed to come from the dead through hysterical elderly females or untrustworthy professionals. I am a perceptive being, and

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would have living persons rather than doubtful messages and spiritistic ramblings.

I had quite recovered from this vague desire when I happened to meet in a night restaurant a young man who was the very counterpart of Byron. Had he worn his neck bare and a corsair's cloak, he might have passed anywhere for the author of *Don Juan*. I inquired about him and learned that he was a student of philosophy, both wealthy and very proud, so of course under those circumstances I could not ask him to come and live with me and become the first number in my collection. But this incident, nevertheless, had shown me the way.

From time to time Nature repeats herself. Here and there in different parts of the world, out of hundreds of millions of men belonging to the white race, one should be able to find in each generation a fairly exact replica of some one of the geniuses of the past. By means of judicious and slight alterations and by dressing the replica after the style of his dead model, one should certainly obtain the illusion of almost perfect identity.

I wasted no time. Within a week I had secured the services of a professor of physiognomics and of a portrait painter who had also dealt with historical subjects, and to these men I intrusted the task of traveling all over Europe, visiting big cities and small towns, to search for and collect, regardless of expense and difficulties, as many doubles of ancient celebrities as possible. They both took the matter very seriously, equipped themselves with iconographic albums composed of photographs of pictures and containing a vast



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number of likenesses taken from books and magazines, and in a month's time they set out.

They wrote to me often, but usually only to ask for more money and to say that the undertaking was more arduous than they had expected. After five months of continuous traveling they had succeeded in engaging only a Cervantes and a Raphael, and were bargaining for an Ibsen. (I had instructed them to bring me only celebrities of international fame.) Subsequent letters informed me that they had got hold of a Tolstoi, a Voltaire, and a Napoleon I. Later they discovered a Socrates and a Shelley. But these were not enough. I wished to start with a dozen at least. They had to labor for another year to find four more, who were a Victor Hugo, a Schiller, a Nero, and a Cromwell. When the twelve doubles arrived at the New Parthenon, I would not see them. The painter must first touch them up, arrange their complexions, and have clothes made for each like those worn by the personages they were to represent. Also, as most of these subjects were uncultured and did not speak English, I called in some teachers of languages and of history to prepare them for the part they were to act. What with one thing and another, I was not able to enjoy my strange collection until two and a half years from the time I had first thought of it.

Unfortunately the great expense and fatigue my assistants and I have had to bear have failed to afford me the satisfaction I had anticipated. The first time I saw my collection of living geniuses assembled I thought the effect very fine. The likenesses were strikingly convincing. The obese Nero, swathed in his purple

### COLLECTING DOUBLES

and studying me through an emerald, was perfect. Beside him stood little Ibsen, with his poodle-dog mustaches, with his big spectacles resting on his snub nose, and looking for all the world like the author of *Peer Gynt*. Voltaire's ferretlike and malicious countenance, surmounted by a well-made wig, pleased me greatly. The youthful Raphael, slightly sallow, emaciated, and pathetic as we see him in the Uffizi portrait, formed a strong contrast to the severe and resolute head of a Cromwell tightly buckled into his shining cuirass. Victor Hugo, with his short white beard and his gray chievious and good-natured faun whom Plato himself would have mistaken for Socrates. The long, gloomy, and dignified countenance of Cervantes contrasted with that of Tolstoi, whose face was that of an aged muzhik. Schiller, tall and slender, looked as if he might have been released recently from a tragic asylum. Napoleon, with his gray frock-coat swelling out over his round belly, stood apart, looking stern and pale.

The trouble began when these people started talking at my invitation. I fancy the masters had taught each one a few phrases reminiscent of their dead doubles, but on finding themselves all together and in the presence of their master, most of them became flurried, and there ensued a scene of the most grotesque confusion.

The counterfeit Socrates, who is an illiterate beggar roped in at Bucharest, kept repeating like a magpie and in the most atrocious English: "I know that I do not know! I know that I do not know!" No one paid any attention to him, but when little Ibsen exclaimed in



a rough voice, "Be thyself!" every one burst out laughing.

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The false Voltaire, a sugar baker from Bordeaux, speaking in careful French but timidly, as if he were ashamed of himself, cried: "*Calomniez! Calomniez! Ecrasez l'infâme!*" Napoleon, removing his small black hat, shouted: "Comrades! Forty centuries look down upon you! . . ." stamping hard with his spurred boot the while, but without succeeding in impressing anybody.

Nero rose majestically and stuttered, almost in a whisper: "The Christians to the lions! Is my mother not dead yet?"

The counterfeit Cervantes gave him a contemptuous glance and started reeling off Spanish: "*En un lugar de la Mancha, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme, no ha mucho tiempo vivia un hidalgo . . .*"

But Schiller cut him short. "All men rejoice! Sing with me, O ye millions, the hymn of rejoicing!" His expression was so doleful, however, that he was quickly silenced.

Cromwell, a robust docker from Liverpool, started to speak, but by this time I had had enough, and I left the room in a rage, disappointed and disgusted.

A few days later I tried speaking with my guests one at a time. Tolstoi, a poor peasant from the government of Kief, humbly confessed that he had nothing to say and that he would be quite satisfied if I would pay his fare home.

I sent for Shelley, who had been a clerk in a shop near Brighton. This person solemnly announced that poetry was the voice of the Almighty and that in

COLLECTING DOUBLES

Prometheus we must recognize the symbol of civilization persecuted by the conservatives. After these astonishing revelations I hastened to dismiss him.

Nor did I have better luck with Victor Hugo, who had been employed in a bank in Nice. This person first recited to me a passage from *Nôtre Dame*, which he had committed to memory, and then proceeded to complain of the food, which did not agree with him, and of the vulgarity of his companions. "Not one of them," he groaned, "knows how to play *la manille!*"

Some conversations among themselves, which I tried as an experiment, were no more successful. That between Nero and Voltaire came near to ending tragically, for Voltaire, enraged by I know not what remark of Nero's, jumped upon his monumental opponent and scratched him cruelly about the eyes. A conversation between Socrates, Cervantes, and Cromwell turned entirely on the relative merits and glories of their several countries and on the best means of banishing insomnia.

The twelve doubles are still here, but will depart, one by one, within the coming week. They are delighted to go, but have asked to be allowed to take with them as souvenirs the historic garments they wore here on solemn occasions.



## THE COUNTERFEIT MURDER

*New Parthenon, June 23*

THE homicidal instinct has been strong in me ever since my earliest youth. The thought of silencing certain voices that annoyed me, of burying beneath the sod a face I could not abide, has always tempted me. But I realized that Western civilization viewed murder on a small scale with disapproval, and as a matter of fact it is only the intermittent occupation of the most degraded members of society. As soon as I began to read history, my heroes were Tamerlane with his pyramids of skulls, Herod with his wholesale massacres, and Caligula with his oft-recurring festivals enlivened by executions.

Had I but been born in the days when the head of a family exercised the rights of life and death over wife, children, and slaves! Then indeed an honest citizen could satisfy his desire (a natural one in our species) without remorse or fear of legal proceedings. Perhaps, also, he who had suppressed a relative was afterwards more humanely and generously inclined towards the survivors.

Today only war remains. But homicide in war is anonymous, and only seldom does one see the results of one's efforts. Besides, one cannot choose, and without choice there can be no satisfaction. Would you accept a wife you had won in a lottery? I have not been able to go to war, and I have withstood all temptations. I have recently had some dummies made; they are of

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leather and are painted and dressed like real men. They are exact copies of some of my enemies, of people I loathe. At vital points in their anatomy the cavities contain small sacks filled with a red liquid.

From time to time, when the fancy takes me, I have these dummies set up among the trees in the park and while walking there, whenever I catch sight of one of them I fire, and the figure collapses, while a stream of counterfeit blood flows from the wound.

This exercise amuses me and acts perhaps also as a salutary safety-valve. But it is not the real thing. In the victim the scream is lacking, and in myself the thrill—and the sense of the irreparable and of reality do not exist. No, it certainly is not the same thing. . . .



## COSMOCRATOR

*New Parthenon, November 2*

I FEAR I have come to the wrong planet. Here I feel cramped. There is not room enough for me. Or perhaps I have made a mistake in the century. My true contemporaries have either been dead thousands of years or are not yet born.

The fact is that I am a stranger everywhere and entirely wasted here. The earth is but a ball of dried dung of which the tour can be made today in a few hours and tomorrow, probably, in a few minutes. An



there are no fitting and worthy occupations for one who is conscious of harboring the appetites and the fancies of a Titan.

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I sometimes reflect that I might make Asia my farm, Africa my hunting-ground or winter garden, North America my factory, with business premises annexed, South America the grazing lands for my flocks and herds, and Europe my museum and home, where I would go to rest. But after all, this would be but a poor way of living. To have the Atlantic for a swimming-pool, the Pacific for a fishpond, Etna for a furnace, to take one's shower bath under Niagara, keep Australia as a zoölogical garden, and the Sahara as a terrace for sun-bathing, are things only the stupid little creatures who inhabit this fifth-rate sphere can regard as awe-inspiring and monstrous.

But for me something more is necessary. My rightful position would be that of the supreme cosmocrator, the director general of universal life, chief engineer on the world's stage, grand juggler with continents and seas. It being impossible, however, to become a demiurge, the career of a demon is the only one that is not unworthy of a man who does not belong to the common herd.

For example, if I could starve a continent, flood a couple of kingdoms, break up an empire into so many republics of San Marino or Andorra, destroy a whole race, detach Europe from Asia by means of a canal running from the Gulf of Bothnia to the Caspian Sea, force all men to speak and write the same language—I think that for two or three years I might be relieved of these ever-recurring fits of ennui.

#### A DIFFICULT CLEAN-UP

I should also like to have in my own household the President of a republic as dactylographer, any available king as chauffeur, a deposed queen as scullery maid, the Kaiser as gardener, the Mikado as door-keeper, and above all I should be glad to have in my pay, as a sort of domestic and talking idol, a Dalai Lama—a living god. With what ecstasy would I wreak vengeance for my intolerable insignificance on these great ones reduced to slavery!



#### A DIFFICULT CLEAN-UP

*Chicago, September 17*

ON CERTAIN evenings a loathing for the human herd that crowds the cities oppresses me so strongly that I find myself wondering if there be no rapid and practical means of sweeping them from the face of the earth. Those bestial faces around the board, those bodies that seem to be but sacks of putrid matter surmounted by a revolting mask, show me a general massacre of our species in the light of a duty, of an urgent measure of hygiene.

I have already formed a plan for such a massacre, which to me seems very sensible. It is extremely simple, calling as it does for two agents only—explosives and poison gases. For cities, from three to a hundred well-placed mines would suffice, and these could be laid in



#### A DIFFICULT CLEAN-UP

drains and water mains. For the country I contemplate thousands of gas factories strategically disposed so that not a foot of space would escape.

At the moment appointed by me, all the mines of dynamite and lyddite would explode, and all the factories would open their discharges and chimneys, their gasometers and reservoirs. In a few seconds the cities would be reduced to masses of debris surrounded by clouds of smoke, and the air of the countryside would immediately become poisonous, suffocating, deadly. According to my calculations, at the end of a couple of hours there should not be a single living being left in any part of the world. I believe this clean-up would prove complete and final.

Certain difficulties, of course, would have to be overcome, the first of these being expense. No private individual, no matter how fabulously rich he might be, would be able to supply the vast capital needed, especially for constructing and equipping the innumerable gas factories. I fancy it would be difficult to organize a company, because so few among the wealthy share my loathing of their kind. It would be unwise to appeal to the State, for although it might be possible to find a country prepared to finance the proposed massacre, it would do so only on condition that its own subjects be spared, which would cause the scheme to fail in its main purpose.

The greatest difficulty of all, however, is the fact of having to employ so many—too many—accomplices, workmen, engineers, chemists, and so forth. It would be almost impossible to keep the secret during the fairly long period of preparation. And as soon as the

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matter became known only one person would suffer death, and that would be the individual who had conceived and planned the undertaking.

Moreover, one must consider man's cowardly terror and his stupid attachment to life. Those engaged in carrying out the beneficent scheme, who must of necessity know all about it beforehand, would find a means of escaping death, and thus several thousand odious creatures would remain on earth.

I realize that, to my infinite regret, I must relinquish this plan, and who knows when the earth will be freed from its disgusting parasites? It is a pity! Deeply do I regret my impotence, my poverty. I am reduced to visualizing, as in a dream, the stupendous, the terrific scene. But this is too small an outlet for my endless loathing.



#### THE CHILD'S BREAD

*Arezzo, August 7*

BY WAY of experiment I made up my mind to live for a few days as if I were a poor man, a tramp, a fugitive. I would live alone, foregoing all company and help. I gave my secretaries, servants, and mechanics a vacation, left my two cars at a garage, bought a suit of old clothes from a peasant, and sallied forth with a few coins in my pocket, to wander in the valleys of the Tuscan Apennines.



#### THE CHILD'S BREAD

For many years I have been living the life of the rich, which is the same thing as saying the life of a victim deprived of freedom. I am tired of lavishly spread boards, of the bowing and smirking of dependents, of the curiosity of too intimate acquaintances and their attitude towards me. I long for the life of poverty and of makeshift that I led up to my twenty-sixth year. After submitting so long to the onslaughts of thousands of beggars and maniacs, I determined to revert to the life of the lonely pauper. In appearance I am now the dirty, slouching tramp.

For him who has wielded every sort of power there is nothing left but impotence. For him who has possessed everything there remains only poverty. I am acting a comedy, an absurd comedy perhaps, but one that has no spectators.

I do not speak Italian and I have brought along neither maps nor guidebooks. I have simply wandered aimlessly. These regions are not rich, but they are beautiful. There are streams, which at this season are dry white ditches; mountains that are scaly and bare and on whose slopes the natives sow corn that comes up thin and poor, together with a crop of thorns and thistles. Higher up there are a few fields that are still green, some streams that bring down more stones than water, a few patches of forest that have escaped the ax—who knows how?—of these mountaineers, the trees' worst enemies. From time to time I come upon a ruined castle, a medieval tower that has been restored, a house with dark walls from which issues forth a group of wondering children, a vast convent hidden among the firs, a church without a tower whose door is closed.

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Everywhere there are white cattle, dirty sheep, pigs that root and grunt, and at long intervals I come upon a shepherd girl, her head bound round with a yellow kerchief, who tries to avoid being seen.

I have not entered a single tavern. As I needed it I have bought bread in the village shops, I have drunk water at the wayside fountains, I have stolen a little sour fruit in the orchards, I have slept under an oak and in the shade of hayricks.

The inhabitants are rough but good-natured. Although I know only a few words of Italian, they have always managed to get my meaning and have offered me what they had without waiting for me to ask. One day I ate in a field with a group of reapers who were resting. They asked me what country I belonged to and where I had come from. This I understood, but I could not answer. But they gave me some soup, some salad, and a tomato. The women talked together, and I gathered they were sorry for me.

On another occasion I came upon an old man cutting some branches alone in a forest. I stayed several hours with him. In his youth he had been in America, and he remembered a few words of English. He told me that there is much poverty in this region, but that the inhabitants all wished to live or at least die among their hills. He was astonished that, coming from a country so rich, I should be so poor. I saw that he suspected me of being a bad character who had fled from America; nevertheless he was very friendly and treated me kindly.

But the encounter that impressed me most was with a little girl. Throughout the previous day I had not



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come across a single town. I had eaten all my bread, and a foolish sense of shame had kept me from asking for some at a peasant's door. I was tired and half starved. Towards evening I found myself in a chestnut grove and I saw that just beyond was a rocky pasture through which ran a brook.

A little girl was sitting beside the stream. On catching sight of me she sprang up, startled. She must have been about twelve or thirteen, and she was the loveliest creature I have ever seen. Her face, gilded by the sun, was illumined by a pair of dreamy green eyes, and her bare head was a mass of waves and ringlets. Her lips, as fresh and red as a halved fruit, parted in a smile she could not suppress, and that was all whiteness. She was a wonder!

In order not to frighten her I sat down on a rock at a little distance. The child seemed reassured, but she neither spoke nor removed her eyes from me. Four very large cows were grazing near at hand. I wiped the sweat from my brow. Ragged and weary as I was, I must indeed have looked the wretched tramp. After some minutes the child took a piece of dark bread from her bundle and coming towards me, offered it with a timid smile and a few murmured words. She had seen that I was hungry. I thanked her as best I could and straightway began gnawing at the bread. Never have I tasted anything so rich and delicious!

Can this be man's true food? Can this be the true life?